



BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance & Counselling Programs

Issue 2006-03

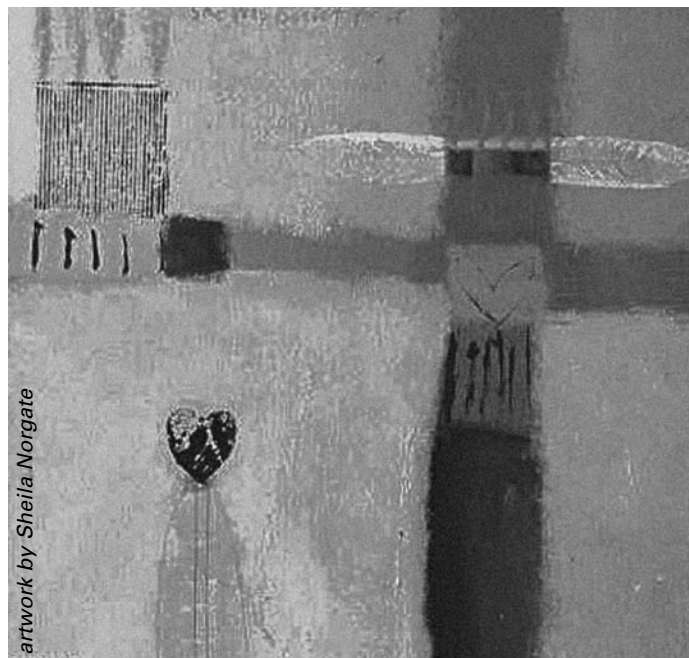
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RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

This issue of the newsletter coincides with our Annual Training Forum, "Emerging Spirit: From Violence to Social Justice Through Faith and Culture." We have gathered articles from many of our keynote speakers and workshop presenters, along with other materials, to provide attendees of the Forum with even more information, analysis and resources on this issue. We hope that the newsletter will be used as a basis for continuing the discussions started at the Forum.



One of the issues that will be addressed at the Forum is the ways in which religious teachings have been misinterpreted and used to justify or condone violence against women. When women are abused by members or leaders of religious communities, they may be told that their religious teachings support the abuse, that they are trying to teach her something. Or a woman may even tell herself that she must stay in an abusive relationship because leaving is morally wrong. In fact, though, in their original form religious teachings tend to promote peaceful and respectful relationships and condemn violence.

In her article "A Perspective on Domestic Violence in the Muslim Community," Salma Elkadi Abugideiri explores the ways in which the Qu'ran (the religious text of Islam) and the teachings of Prophet Mohammed (which Muslims also follow) explicitly condemn violence against women.* Her insights are particularly valuable at this time, when anti-Islamic rhetoric is widespread. Many non-Muslim North Americans are taught that Islam is a "violent religion," and that fundamentalist sects of Islam are representative of all Muslims.

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Thanks to Laurie Dalzell, Janet Freeman, Marilynne Johnny, Barb Mallet, the FaithTrust Institute, and the Japanese Consulate in Vancouver.

This newsletter is produced three times a year and provided free of charge to BCASVACP members. The views expressed by newsletter contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the BCASVACP Board and/or staff. Please contribute updates, articles, photos, etc by mail or by email to leavitts@endingviolence.org.

The services provided by the BCASVACP are supported by the Ministry of Community Services, The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, and the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority.

Charitable # 13926 5821 RR0001




Message from the Director

Most of you will receive this newsletter at our Annual Training Forum, and I am so looking forward to seeing everyone there! For those of you who are unable to be at the Forum, we will, as always, continue to be in touch through email, phone and other training events.

The title of this year's Forum, as you know, is "Emerging Spirit: From Violence To Social Justice Through Faith and Culture." I am thrilled that the Association has tackled this rich and complex topic. The keynote speakers and workshop facilitators that we have engaged for the Forum bring a wealth of experience and insight to difficult and important discussions about how faith and culture can both support and hinder those who have experienced violence. And we know that those who are attending the Forum will bring their knowledge as well, so that we can all learn from each other. We know of course that we can only begin many of these discussions at the Forum, and that they will continue and develop as the years go on.

This newsletter is meant as a companion to our Forum, and many of our presenters have contributed articles. We also have, as always, exciting news from our programs and new, practical ideas and resources for anti-violence workers. Please continue to send us your news and recommended resources so that we can share them with others across the province.

Welcome to the Forum, welcome to the newsletter, and as always, thank you for the amazing work you do to support survivors of violence across BC. 

Tracy Porteous

Corrections

In our last newsletter (Fall 2006), in the article "Supporting Families of Missing and Murdered Women in Vancouver," we mistakenly stated that the Missing Women Task Force is part of the Crime Victim Assistance Program (CVAP). In fact, it is separate from CVAP.

Also in that issue, we featured the work of PEERS Prince George in the article "Innovative Approaches to Supporting Sex Workers Across BC," but left the agency out of the list of "Organizations Working with Sex Workers in BC."

Our apologies for these errors.

RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

continued from Page 1

Abugideiri works with Muslim women in the United States who have experienced violence. She finds that in many families violence begins after immigration to the States, as an aftermath of war or other trauma, or the high pressure resulting from the Patriot Act provisions (e.g. where “suspected terrorists” can be detained without basic rights). Abugideiri says,

The Qu’ran describes the relationship between spouses as one founded on mercy, compassion, and tranquility... As far as domestic violence is concerned, it is an issue that has been dealt with from a preventive stance since the Qu’ran clearly prohibits any kind of injustice or oppression. There are verses that specifically prohibit behaviours that constitute emotional and psychological abuse, such as spying, intimidating, name-calling, insulting and black-mailing.

Abugideiri goes on to list the numerous ways in which American Muslim communities have addressed domestic violence in progressive ways. For example, Muslim leaders in one community gathered together to sign a proclamation against domestic violence; other leaders speak regularly to their congregations about the issue; and some communities have established centres or groups specifically for Muslim women who have experienced violence.

In “A Commentary on Religious Issues in Family Violence” by Rev Marie Fortune with contributions by Judith Hertz*, the authors discuss some of the Jewish and Christian religious teachings that prohibit violence against women (see Sexual Abuse of Women and Girls by Clergy, page 11 and Coordinating Services with Rural Faith Communities, page 24 for more on Christian teachings).

An important teaching in Judaism is the value of “shalom bayit” or peace in the home. As Judith Hertz writes,

The concept of Shalom Bayit should not be misinterpreted as encouraging the preservation of an abusive marriage. When domestic harmony is impossible because of physical abuse, the only way for peace may be dissolution of marriage. Although marriage is viewed as permanent, divorce has always been an option according to Jewish tradition.

Although many have interpreted Christian teachings as justifying inequality between men and women and even abuse in


marriages, a number of commentators have pointed out that this is inaccurate. One of the passages that is often cited as supporting respectful treatment of women is Ephesians 5:28-29: “Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes it, as Christ does the Church, because we are members of his body.” Marie Fortune interprets this in the following way:

A husband is to nourish and cherish his own body and that of his wife. Physical battering which occurs between spouses is probably the most blatant violation of this teaching and a clear reflection of the self-hatred in the one who is abusive.

Fortune and Hertz, as well as Abugideiri, also point out that religious teachings can be misinterpreted by victims of abuse themselves. If victims believe that the abuse and their suffering is a result of not being a “good” Christian, Jew or Muslim, they not only end up blaming themselves, but they may also see themselves as abandoned by their god(s). This, of course, can greatly increase emotional pain and isolation.

If religious leaders try to help survivors using simplistic interpretations of religious teachings, survivors can be deeply hurt as a result (for example, telling victims of violence that everything will be OK if they just pray, or attend services regularly, or accept Jesus as their saviour). As Fortune and Hertz write,

The religious teachings of the Jewish and Christian traditions are adequate to address the experience of contemporary persons when the traditions acknowledge the complexity, the paradox, and sometimes the incomprehensible nature of these experiences. The most important resource which the church or synagogue can provide is to be available to support those who are suffering, to be a sign of God’s presence, and to be willing to struggle with the questions which the experience may raise.

These are just some of the religious teachings that promote non-violent relationships. If secular (non-religious) support workers are aware of teachings such as these, this can be a valuable piece of information to offer women who have been told that their religion supports abuse. 

**These articles and others can be accessed on the website of the Faith Trust Institute: www.faititrustinstitute.org See Resources section for more titles.*

BASIC DEFINITIONS OF MAJOR RELIGIONS

It goes without saying that religions are hard to define in a single paragraph. However, many people are unfamiliar with any religion aside from their own. We include these basic definitions as part of the context for our discussions of faith and culture.

The following definitions are adapted from wikipedia and other online sources.

Christianity is a monotheistic (one god) religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, as presented in the New Testament. Christians believe Jesus to be the Messiah (saviour). Christianity began in the 1st century as a Jewish sect, and shares many religious texts with Judaism, specifically the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament. There are many different groups or denominations of Christians, sometimes divided into three main groups: Catholicism, Eastern Christianity and Protestantism.


Islam is a monotheistic religion based upon the holy text called the Qu'ran, which Muslims believe was sent by God through Prophet Muhammad. Muslims believe Prophet Muhammad to have been God's final prophet. As a result, most of them see the actions and teachings of Prophet Muhammad to be indispensable tools for interpreting the Qu'ran. The main sects of Islam are Shi'a and Sunni, with smaller subjects within these.

Hinduism encompasses many religious beliefs, practices, and denominations. Most Hindus believe in a supreme cosmic spirit called Brahman, who is worshipped in many forms, represented by individual deities such as Vishnu, Shiva and Shakti. Unlike most other major religions, Hinduism has no single founder and is based on a number of religious texts developed over many centuries that contain spiritual insights and practical guidance.

Buddhism is a non-theistic (not based on god) religion, a way of life and a philosophy. It focuses on the teachings of Gautama Buddha, who was born in what is now Nepal around the fifth century BCE. Buddhism spread throughout the Indian subcontinent in the five centuries following the Buddha's passing, and propagated into Central, Southeast, and East Asia over the next two millennia. Today, Buddhism is divided primarily into three traditions: Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana.

Sikhism is a monotheistic religion that began in sixteenth century Northern India with the teachings of Guru Nanak and nine successive human gurus. Sikhism advocates the pursuit of salvation through disciplined, personal meditation on the name and message of God. The followers of Sikhism are

ordained to follow the teachings of the ten Sikh gurus, as well as the holy scripture, which includes the selected works of many authors. Sikhism's traditions and teachings are distinctly associated with the history, society and culture of the Punjab.

Judaism is one of the oldest religious traditions still practiced today. The values and history of the Jewish people are a major part of the foundation of other Abrahamic religions such as Christianity, Islam, as well as Samaritanism and the Bahá'í Faith. Judaism differs from many religions in that its central authority is not vested in any person or group but rather in its writings and traditions. There are many variations within Jewish practice, though certain basic principles remain, particularly the belief in a single God who created the universe and continues to be involved in its governance. According to traditional Jewish belief, the God who created the world established a covenant with the Jewish people, and revealed his laws and commandments to them in the form of the Torah. The practice of Judaism is devoted to the study and observance of these laws and commandments, as written in the Torah. 

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A Snapshot of Religious Affiliation in Canada and BC

We include these statistics to provide a bit of context for our discussions of faith and culture. It's interesting to note that one of the largest groups is people who say that they have no religious affiliation. Many of the religious groups in the list of world religions may be unfamiliar to readers; we encourage you to find out more about them through the many online resources available. Even <http://wikipedia.org> has some very thorough definitions and many useful links—though of course some online resources are more accurate and useful than others.

Religious Identity in Canada and BC*		
	Canada	BC
Total population	29,639,035	3,868,875
Catholic	12,936,905	675,320
Protestant	8,654,850	1,213,295
Christian Orthodox	479,620	35,655
Christian not included elsewhere	780,450	200,345
Muslim	579,640	56,220
Jewish	329,995	21,230
Buddhist	300,345	85,540
Hindu	297,200	31,500
Sikh	278,410	135,310
Eastern religions	37,550	9,970
Other religions	63,975	16,205
No religious affiliation	4,900,090	1,388,300

**From the 2001 Census carried out by Statistics Canada.*

And the world**:

Christianity	2.1 billion
Secular/Atheist/Irreligious /Agnostic/Nontheist	1.1 billion
Chinese folk religion	394 million
Primal indigenous ("Pagan")	300 million
Sikhism	23 million
Spiritism	15 million
Bahá'í Faith	7 million
Shinto	4 million (see below)
Zoroastrianism	2.6 million
Neo-Paganism	1 million
Rastafari movement	600,000

Islam	1.3 billion
Hinduism	900 million
Buddhism	376 million
African traditional and diasporic	100 million
Juche	19 million
Judaism	14 million
Jainism	4.2 million
Cao Dai	4 million
Tenrikyo	2 million
Unitarian Universalism	800,000

***From <http://wikipedia.org> (approximate numbers).*

ANTI-VIOLENCE WORKERS AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS: THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKING TOGETHER

An excerpt from "A Commentary on Religious Issues in Family Violence" by Rev Marie Fortune with contributions by Judith Hertz. Available on the website of the FaithTrust Institute at www.faithtrustinstitute.org. Reprinted with permission. The article is focused on Christian and Jewish women, but the principles could be applied to other situations as well.

The crisis of family violence affects people physically, psychologically, and spiritually. Each of these dimensions must be addressed, both for victims and for those in the family who abuse them. Approached from either a secular or religious perspective alone, certain needs and issues tend to be disregarded. This reflects a serious lack of understanding of the nature of family violence and its impact on people's lives. Treatment of families experiencing violence and abuse requires integrating the needs of the whole person. Thus, the importance of developing a shared understanding and co-operation between secular and religious helpers to deal with family violence cannot be emphasized too strongly.

Occasionally, a social worker, psychotherapist, or other secular service provider will wonder, "why bother with religious concerns at all?" The answer is a very practical one: religious issues or concerns which surface for people in the midst of crisis are primary issues. If not addressed in some way, at some point, they will inevitably become roadblocks to the client's efforts to resolve the crisis and move on with her/his life. In addition, a person's religious beliefs and community of faith (church or synagogue) can provide a primary support system for an individual and her/his family in the midst of an experience of family violence.

For a pastor, priest, rabbi, lay counselor or other person approaching family violence from a religious perspective, there is little question about the relevance of religious concerns: these are primary for any religious person. Rather, they may doubt the importance of dealing with concerns for shelter, safety, intervention and treatment. "These people just need to get right with God and everything will be fine." This perspective overlooks the fact that these other issues are practical and important as well. Family violence is complex and potentially lethal; these seemingly mundane concerns represent immediate and critical needs.

[...]

Cooperative Roles for Secular Counselor and Minister/Rabbi

Both the secular counselor and the minister or rabbi have important roles to play in response to family violence. Families in which there is abuse need the support and expertise of both in times of crisis. Sometimes the efforts of the two will come into conflict, as illustrated by the following situation:

We received a call at the Center from a local shelter for abused women. The shelter worker indicated that she had a badly beaten woman there whose minister had told her to go back home to her husband. The worker asked us to call the minister and "straighten him out." Ten minutes later we received a call from the minister. He said that the shelter had one of his parishioners there and the shelter worker had told her to get a divorce. He asked us to call the shelter and "straighten them out."

In the above case, both the shelter worker and the minister had the best interests of the victim in mind. Yet they were clearly at odds with each other because they did not understand the other's concerns which related to the needs of the victim. The shelter worker did not understand the minister's concern for maintaining the family and the minister did not understand that the woman's life was in danger. We arranged for the minister and the shelter worker to talk directly with each other, sharing their concerns in order to seek a solution in the best interest of the victim. This was accomplished successfully. The need for cooperation and communication between counselors and ministers or rabbis is clear so that the needs of parishioners/congregants/clients are best served and the resources of both religious and secular helpers are utilized effectively.

Role of the Secular Counselor

In the secular setting, a social worker or mental health provider may encounter a victim or abuser who raises religious questions or concerns. When this occurs, the following guidelines are helpful:

- 1) Pay attention to religious questions/comments/ references.
- 2) Affirm these concerns as appropriate and check out their importance for the client.
- 3) Having identified and affirmed this area of concern, if you are uncomfortable with it yourself or feel unqualified to


pursue it, refer to a pastor/priest/rabbi who is trained to help and whom you know and trust.

- 4) If you are comfortable and would like to pursue the concern, do so, emphasizing the ways in which the client's religious tradition can be a resource to her/him and can in no way be used to justify or allow abuse or violence to continue in the family. (See below.)

Role of Clergy

The minister/rabbi can most effectively help family abuse victims and offenders by cooperating with secular resources. Combined, these provide a balanced approach which deals with specific external, physical, and emotional needs while addressing the larger religious and philosophical issues.

When approached about family violence, the minister/rabbi can use the following guidelines:

- 1) Be aware of the dynamics of family violence and utilize this understanding in evaluating the situation.
- 2) Use your expertise as a religious authority and spiritual leader to illuminate the positive value of religious traditions while clarifying that they do not justify or condone family abuse. (See below.)
- 3) Identify the parishioner/congregant's immediate needs and REFER to a secular resource (if available) to deal with the specifics of abuse, intervention and treatment.
- 4) If you are comfortable pursuing the matter, provide additional pastoral support and encouragement to help families dealing with violence to take full advantage of available resources. 

INSPIRING WORDS FROM RELIGIOUS LEADERS...

Peaceful Families Proclamation by Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area Imams

On this twenty eighth day of May, 2005, we the Imams and Activists of the Muslim community in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, hereby proclaim that we stand united against any oppression, violence, or injustice in the home.

We do acknowledge that oppression and violence exist in the homes of our community, and we speak in one voice to take a stand to work towards the prevention of such oppression and violence by raising awareness and understanding of this issue in our community.

We also agree to train ourselves and others to better serve the needs of victims, and to provide the moral and spiritual support necessary to stand against it.

We also recognize that Islamic teachings have been misused to justify domestic violence.

Therefore, we hereby commit to working together and with other professionals, including counselors, social workers and advocates, to actively address this issue at all levels in the community from within the Islamic paradigm.

National Declaration by Religious and Spiritual Leaders to Address Violence Against Women, signed by American Jewish, Christian, Native, Buddhist, Muslim and Jainist leaders, April 2006


We proclaim with one voice as national spiritual and religious leaders that violence against women exists in all communities, including our own, and is morally, spiritually and universally intolerable.

We acknowledge that our sacred texts, traditions and values have too often been misused to perpetuate and condone abuse.

We commit ourselves to working toward the day when all women will be safe and abuse will be no more.

We draw upon our healing texts and practices to help make our families and societies whole.

Our religious and spiritual traditions compel us to work for justice and the eradication of violence against women.

We call upon people of all religious and spiritual traditions to join us. 

WHEN THE EAGLE FEATHER DROPS

BY DONNA LEE

Excerpts from a keynote talk at Family Matters conference put on by the Vernon and District Women's Centre and Vernon Transition House.

The meaning people place on their experiences of events often does not include a political analysis of racism, culture, gender and poverty. Instead people consider themselves to be at fault, to blame.

Within our culture, we have ways of doing things, beliefs and laws, a history and process of communication. Experiences and events to a large extent are defined by one's culture. I have been told by some elders that it has not been a tradition or law to raise your hand against your children. Yet, our children have experienced these things.

Spirituality is a vital aspect of tradition and therapy. Families must be welcomed traditionally and formally, as one would greet honored guests, and they must, from the very beginning, be treated as family and be made to feel welcome, comfortable and connected. For it is only when we feel truly connected that we may tell our stories and find new liberating meanings.

Consider this list: symptoms: loss of sleep, poor sleeping patterns, violence, depression, delinquency, marital stress, truancy from schools, parenting problems, substance abuse. Presented in a therapy session, these symptoms appear as psychosomatic illnesses. Feel the sadness, hopelessness, and self-blame that stem from this net of known experiences: the experiencing of events, the events of poverty, of racism, of culture and of gender.

Women have been leaving the reserves to get help. Many native women have told me that they fear self-government. They say women and children are treated as second-class-citizens on reserve and male-dominated tribal councils won't address issues of family violence and sexual abuse. ... Denial is strong in our communities. Politics at the community level and on reserve make it harder for a woman to report abuse. ... I recall a recent case of a young woman and mother who had an abusive partner. She couldn't go for help because when the worker

came to visit, the partner's sister would stay with her to make sure she didn't say anything to incriminate her brother. Trapped, women are afraid to report for fear they will be blamed in the community and their partner's families will turn against them. Working with band councils where the atmosphere of alcoholism, poverty and violence still continues leaves many workers/counselors (who have gone back to their reserves to try and work with their own communities) burnt out, underpaid and unappreciated, causing them to leave for their own sobriety and health.

In order for healing to take place, we cannot work with one symptom in isolation, such as depression or parenting problems. It is vital to address the whole meaning. A new understanding strengthens feelings of self-worth and overcomes feelings of self-blame and failure.

When the eagle feather drops...with our left hand we will capture the spirit of that feather... our spiritual leaders have experienced trauma and war dances. Some of their role models were the oblate priests and men of the robe who abused their childhood spirit when they were taken away to the residential schools...We are taught to respect our elders...yet I know elders who have acknowledged their own abusive behaviors. I know elders who have managed to escape the pain of the gift of the Indian agent's firewater, or sexual abuse. These Elders will not stand for other elders or medicine people abusing their positions. We need to know who these elders are...those that respect the traditions and laws of our creator, not those who hide in the guise of tradition in order to exploit people, to act out their own pain. ☐



Donna Lee, a feminist therapist and two-spirited grandmother, has worked in the field of family violence for the more than 20 years. She is presenting a workshop at our Annual Training Forum.

"YOU MADE YOUR BED...."

BY KASHMIR K. BESLA

For the last several weeks, my colleague Kim Samra and I have been meeting weekly to prepare for the upcoming BCASPVACP conference. During my research and preparation, I began to notice some trends. I have been informally interviewing several friends about their religious beliefs and practices, and how they may impact a woman when deciding to leave an abusive relationship. I spoke with women of various religious beliefs including Christian, Catholic, Moslem and Sikh. I realized in speaking with them that practicing a faith does not mean that the decision to leave an abuser is made easier. In fact, the decision to leave can be made harder because of how the religion is interpreted.

Most women would agree that their God is not a cruel or vengeful God and He/She would not want them to suffer. However, the message many women receive is that they perhaps should suffer, because their suffering is the price they must pay to enter the afterlife. One friend said that her Christian religion teaches forgiveness of the abuser, and that she must be patient and tolerant towards him. She said the woman may be told that the abuse is "her cross to bear, just as Jesus suffered for the world." Forgiveness and understanding towards the abuser was a common theme among the interviews. However, each woman admitted that nowhere in their Holy Books did they see when it would be acceptable for a woman to consider her own safety and that of her children, before she finally decided to get away from the abuser. The messages and teachings are interpreted by men, so it is difficult to really know the intention of the original writings. Somehow, the interpretations seem to favor the abuser in these situations.

Another interesting discovery that I had was a particular phrase that women said in two separate interviews. My friend who practices Catholicism explained how a friend of hers was disowned by her parents, after divorcing her husband. The friend was thirty-five years old at the time, and was deeply hurt by her parents' inability to accept her as a divorced woman. Her parents told her, "You have made your bed, now you must lie in it." This quote stayed with me particularly because of a phrase I have heard my own parents use when referring to marriage and divorce. The phrase goes, "A marriage is not a bed, which you can do and undo as you please." (The beds in India were traditionally hand made from strong rope, and could be undone and mended if they broke.) I thought it was curious that both cultures referred to the bed when speaking about issues of marriage and divorce. The bed being representative for so much more in a relationship, it symbolizes the sanctity and commitment between people. A woman in an abusive relationship may have made her bed (i.e. her marriage), but she has the right to choose if she will continue to sleep in it. With the right supports, she can finally have the courage to walk away, and find a safer bed to call her home. God from any religion would want that for her. ☞

Kashmir Besla is a Family Counsellor working at The Children's Foundation and does private contract work. She has also worked in the CBVAP and STV Counselling Programs at the Surrey Women's Centre. She is facilitating a workshop at our Annual Training Forum with Kim Samra from Surrey RCMP Victim Services.

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AGNES PAREYIO, MAASAI ACTIVIST AGAINST FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

BY MAGGIE ZIEGLER, MA

Agnes Pareyio, a Maasai woman from Kenya, has broken silence in a way that brings courage to every survivor and inspiration to all working for a safer world.

I recently met Agnes on Salt Spring Island, at a conference on taking action on AIDS in Africa. Invited because her fierce advocacy for African women's rights fit the conference theme of gender inequality, she inspired all present. I want to share a little of her story, which reminds us that violence against women is a global phenomenon, that building international solidarity is important and that we can learn much from women's struggles in far away places.



Agnes Pareyio and Maggie Ziegler

The Maasai practice female circumcision. Agnes was a vocal girl, declaring loudly that she didn't want to be cut. You are a coward, the villagers said. I can't call you a woman if you don't do this, her mother said. Agnes capitulated, was married off at fourteen years, and "cultivated a hate for what was done."

Her time came. Over ten years ago Agnes began to walk from village to village speaking out against female genital mutilation (FGM). You are crazy, people said. No, look, she replied, showing them wooden models of female genitalia in their natural state


and distorted by circumcision. Do you want this? Let me tell you the purpose of a clitoris.

Surely, she said, it is possible to reject FGM and still be Maasai. Despite threats, despite her own fears, she just went ahead, determined to tell the truth.

Many listened. One day Eve Ensler (of Vagina Monologue fame) met Agnes and helped her acquire a car, so she could reach more villagers. A woman's organization supported her advocacy for girls' education. Agnes continued to speak out, arguing that FGM and early marriage led to girls dropping out of school, which was a significant contribution to family poverty.

In 2002, the Tasaru Girls Refuge, a safe house for girls, opened in Narok and began to provide shelter, education and alternatives to FGM and early marriage. Importantly, the program actively supports reconciliation of the girls with their families, whenever possible. And Agnes, realizing that the rituals surrounding FGM were a time when women passed knowledge to their daughters, began to develop an alternative initiation rite. Now the girls partake in a six-day seclusion filled with education and ritual and supported by elders and godmothers.

In Narok, discussion of FGM is no longer taboo. Agnes proved that attitudes had changed when she was elected to the Narok County Council. The only woman on council, she is the deputy mayor, a title she carries proudly today, along with being the United Nations Person of the Year in Kenya in 2005.

These days, FGM still continues. But thanks to Agnes Pareyio there has been a shift in one part of Africa, a shift big enough to send tremors around the world that resulted in Agnes visiting my community. 

Maggie Ziegler has worked in the anti-violence field for thirty years as a psychotherapist and educator. Her international experience has included working in Croatia with women's groups supporting women traumatized by the wars in the former Yugoslavia, and providing family violence training in Japan. As a way to prepare herself for an upcoming trip to Kenya this winter, which includes a month-long volunteer stint doing AIDS education, Maggie became a key organizer for the Salt Spring conference. She is excited to have an invitation to visit Agnes and the girls' refuge in Narok.

SEXUAL ABUSE OF WOMEN AND GIRLS BY CLERGY

BY SUSAN ARMSTRONG, M.ED. R.C.C



This is an updated version of an article that appeared in Canadian Woman Studies in 1994.

Due to lack of research, we do not have concrete numbers regarding the incidence of sexual abuse by clergy. One self-report study performed in the US reported that 12 per cent of the 300 clergy who responded reported having had sexual intercourse with their parishioners.* Out of all the professional groups responding in the study, clergy reported the highest rate of sexual involvement with clients. Women's experiences of sexual abuse by clergy have not been revealed for a number of reasons.

- For adult victims, a difficulty in naming the abuse, perceiving the abuse as a relationship
- Lack of safe spaces to disclose
- Clergy are treated as a professional body who are self-regulating, thus disclosure is often to the religious/spiritual institution
- Fear of blame, ridicule and loss of religious/spiritual community
- Invisibility of women and girls as victims of clergy sexual abuse
- Lack of policy and procedure for processing disclosures of abuse within religious/spiritual institutions

The struggle over disclosure is made painfully clear in this survivor's account:

For a long time my abuse happened Sunday mornings. Then, we'd go to church... it's happening in the rectory in front of the crucifix where I'd be looking at Jesus. Is this just suffering that I'm supposed to be taking on? Why is Jesus allowing this? Why is God allowing this? Am I bad? Then, I see my parents very pious and kneeling down to the church, to this man. Everyone's looking up at this man as if he's God. How could I ever say anything?***

Disclosure of sexual abuse by clergy may be particularly problematic in religious institutions that lack women in leadership positions. Catholicism as one example reinforces silence through their theology and tradition. A woman brought up in the Catholic Church has inherited the guilt of Eve, the seductress, and can foresee all too well how her allegations may be received. Most Catholic girls have been told the story of St. Maria Goretti who lost her life to her rapist and was canonized for the active defence of her virginity and her forgiveness of the attacker. Thus the representation of girls and women in the Catholic Church is either seductress or virgin: damaging "choices" for a girl or woman being abused by her pastor. The priest, in his celibate, self-sacrificial role, is regarded as God-like and indeed has been accorded as much power and authority. The abuse of women and children is an outgrowth of the power relationships within the Church structure. Women have been excluded from leadership in the patriarchal Church. Obedience to male and priestly authority, and servitude and chastity, have been enduring lessons for women. The Church teaches that women are subordinates, and women and children are male property rather than persons. Such teachings reinforce an environment where sexual abuse can occur, and ensure the continuation of silence.

The effects of clergy sexual abuse are distinct relative to other forms of sexual abuse, particularly when the victim-survivor is a child. Religious institutions have traditionally been seen as places of safety and caring. The portrayal of the Church as a safe haven headed by God's representatives results in immense spiritual and psychological harm for victim-

survivors of clergy sexual abuse. The self-blame so common in sexual abuse is intensified by the perpetrator's "godly" position. Children may believe that God is punishing them for their sins or bad behaviour. The family's adherence to Church teachings and respect for the abuser may be perceived as condoning the abuse the child suffers. Often victim-survivors feel they must leave the church they once believed in, their faith in the priest, institution and sometimes God crushed.


I decided to leave the Church. This was very, very painful to do. I was very angry that I was being forced out of the Church, that there was not a place for me... that they would not allow a place, not only for a survivor but for a feminist. There's no place for women in the Catholic Church as far as I am concerned, and there certainly wasn't a place for me.

The despair and loss is evident in the following statement:

So, my family still doesn't talk about it. They've told a few friends but no one ever mentions it to me... They believe I'll get over this and come back to the Church. I'm no longer in contact with them... As a survivor, I think you pay and pay and pay. I don't know where it will end. I'm the one who has lost my family. I'm the one who has lost my childhood. I'm the one who has lost money in trying to pay for counselling.

Given the silencing of women and protection of clergy, and the gross injustice children and women experience within many religious/spiritual institutions, what is the direction we need to take?

- Conduct Canadian research on the incidence of clergy sexual abuse and its specific impacts
- Promote safe spaces outside of religious/spiritual institutions where women and girls can disclose clergy sexual abuse
- Provide advocacy for those who wish to pursue justice and accountability within their religious institution
- Increase access to counselling by mandating that survivors of clergy sexual abuse can work with the counsellor of their choice rather than a church appointed one
- Push for nation wide protocols on dealing with disclosures within religious institutions
- Create a standard of care for survivors of clergy sexual abuse within religious institutions
- Increase the visibility of women survivors of clergy sexual abuse

Susan Armstrong is the Program Manager at BCASVACP and previously a therapist in full time practice. She is a survivor of clergy sexual abuse and as part of her Master's of Education completed research on women's experiences of sexual abuse by clergy. 

** Blackman's study cited in Schoener, Gary R. et al (eds). Psychotherapists' Sexual Involvement with Clients: Interventions and Prevention. (Minneapolis: Walk-In Counselling Centre, 1987.)*

*** Quotations of survivors are taken from transcripts of interviews done by the author and two colleagues.*

**BCASVACP Member's
Toll-Free Line!
1-877-633-2505**

FORGIVENESS: THE MANDATE IN RED

BY REV. SHARON ELLIS DAVIS, PhD



If the most radical commandment uttered by Jesus in the Bible is “Love your enemies,” then the second most radical of his words must be those on forgiveness. In the book of Matthew Chapter 18: verse 21, Peter is asking Jesus how many times he should forgive his brother if his brother sinned against him. Peter gave a suggestion implying that seven would be the number of times he should forgive. Jesus’ response to Peter was, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven” (Matthew 18:22 NKJV).

As Christians, we may debate many passages of the Bible for its accuracy and possible relevancy to our current context. However, most of us take the words of Jesus seriously. As a child reared in the Pentecostal denomination, I remember being told that the red letters in the Bible indicated what Jesus said. And, when Jesus is speaking (indicated by the red letters), we are to stop, read, take note, obey and reverence his words. After all, Jesus, himself is speaking. Also, part of my religious tradition taught us to receive the whole of God’s words unquestioned. We had a saying: “God said it, I believe it, and that settles it.” Consequently for many years I never dared question the Bible and certainly not the words of Jesus written in red.

Now, we live in different times. We live within cultures where people not only question the words coming from this sacred text, but Christianity as well, asking if our religion has the ability to facilitate a liberating Gospel message and meaning

that does not seek to oppress, dominate, and destroy. It is within this cultural milieu that we find ourselves considering Jesus’ words of forgiveness.

Jesus says “forgive seventy times seven.” Well, these are the words of Jesus. However, have we stopped to ask female victims and survivors of violence who have been physically, emotionally, sexually and economically abused how they felt about Jesus’ seemingly point blank, non-reflective, command to forgive seventy times seven? Or, have we simply preached forgiveness without reflecting on how abused women have to negotiate their anger, frustration, pain, and suffering with the words of Jesus that say they must forgive over and over again?

I have worked as an advocate for victims of domestic violence for over twenty years. I have counselled hundreds of survivors of sexual and domestic violence. And as a seminary professor, I have taught courses on Sexual and Domestic Violence and Pastoral Care to pastors, priests, and deacons studying for the ordained ministry. The one theme that seems to be dominant in the minds of victims, survivors, and caregivers is that of forgiveness. Jesus’ mandate elicits responses that range from rage to passive submissiveness to God’s words. Those who are angry tend to reject any notion that mandates them to forgive their abusers. Those whose response is passive submissiveness to Jesus’ mandate tend to mask their anger in desperate attempts to be obedient and positively responsive and amenable to forgiving their abuser.

Today, clergy, seminarians, professors, and other leaders within faith institutions are having, because of the cries of abused women, to re-visit these important words of forgiveness talked about by Jesus. What did Jesus really mean when he used the word “forgiveness?” Did Jesus intend to let abusers off the hook by simply having abused women forgive them? What would Jesus say to abused women today about forgiving their abusers?

Jesus’ mandate on forgiveness (written in red) does not explain how this process of forgiveness takes place, nor does his mandate describe what forgiveness would look or feel like to the abused woman when it occurred. Jesus did not explain the implementation process or timeline necessary for forgiveness.


However, we do have a beginning model that we can possibly use in our theological discourse on forgiveness. That

model is Jesus on the cross. On the cross Jesus cried out, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). In this case, Jesus did not offer forgiveness directly; he released those who wounded him into the hands of God, the Father. In this release, Jesus petitioned for God to forgive them. Also, while on the cross, a thief cried out to Jesus. The thief acknowledged to Jesus his and the other thief's hanging on the cross with him, sinfulness. The thief also acknowledged to Jesus that he understood that Jesus had done nothing to deserve this awful punishment. It was this acknowledgement that moved Jesus to offer (without turning him over to God) this man eternal life.

Perhaps, as we revisit Jesus' words on forgiveness, we can also revisit his actions, thereby connecting his walk with his talk. Jesus' talk was, no doubt, that of forgiveness. However, he demonstrated how forgiveness can take place while he was on the cross. In the case of non-repentance, he pleaded to God on behalf of those who abused him. However, in the case of the thief, who confessed his guiltiness and Jesus' innocence and asked to be remembered, Jesus granted him eternal life.

There is a popular saying that has been around several years. The saying is, "What Would Jesus Do?" (WWJD). Many scholars reject this saying, understanding that we need to go

deeper in our analysis. However, if we ask the question and combine that with a proper analysis and exegesis [interpretation] of Jesus' words and actions, perhaps we can begin to construct, individually and collectively, a theology of forgiveness that honors the experiences and victimization of women and their struggle to become whole again.

This work is not just the work of pastors, theologians and scholars. It is the work of those who have been consistently and persistently pointed (in response to them being abused) to those letters in red contained in the Word of God, and then, mandated to forgive seventy times seven. Together we must produce a theology of forgiveness that liberates victims and that include the voices of those whose lives have been turned upside down by this mandate in red. 

Rev. Dr. Sharon Ellis Davis is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ (UCC), the Co-Founder and Senior Pastor of God Can Ministries, UCC, and a Certified Domestic Violence Counsellor. She is also a speaker for the Faith Trust Institute in Seattle. She is an Adjunct Professor for the McCormick Theological Seminary and Police Chaplain for the Chicago Police Department. Sharon is a keynote speaker at our Annual Training Forum.

TO KILL IN THE NAME OF RELIGION

BY SENATOR MOBINA JAFFER



Presently, there are many times when religious beliefs are mentioned as a reason for killing, especially when it comes to

women. There are many questions we need to ask when we examine religion or religious belief as a reason for women to be treated as submissive, be assaulted or pay the ultimate price, death.

- The questions we all need to ask are things like:
- Who received the messages from our creator?
- How were these messages written?
- Who wrote these messages?
- Who is giving us this interpretation of our creator's messages?

One very important aspect of all these discussions is that people tend to receive the message of God from the interpreter of the message as if the interpreter is transmitting this message free from any cultural or geographic [or gendered] context. The message is transmitted by the interpreter who was raised in an era, time or cultural background when or where the status of women was not equal.

When people interpret religion, we also have to consider the person's culture. What is meant by culture? Culture is evolving, dynamic, vibrant, and constantly changing with the times; consider what the status of women in Canada was just forty, thirty, and even ten years ago. Often, the culture as interpreted is an infected, stale culture—a culture that does not even exist in the place in which it was interpreted.

We need to ask people when they interpret or state a particular practice, whether it is followed for cultural reasons and if so, establish some other facts as well. For instance, we need to know the cultural context the practice was established in and in what era, when it started and how widely followed it is, and finally whether the practice itself is harmful to women.

In my presentation, I will suggest that some practices that encourage violence and killing in the name of religion are really cultural, social or political issues. Examples of some

practices to be discussed will include honour killings, female genital mutilation, trafficking against women and children and terrorism in the name of religion. It is my hope to set out some of the reasons we must always be extremely vigilant when people argue that their violent or murderous actions are done in the name of religion. ☐

Senator Jaffer is the first East Indian, first Muslim and first African in the Canadian Senate. She has been Canada's Special Envoy for Peace in Sudan and a member of the Prime Minister's Special Advisory Team focusing on the implementation of the Peace Process in Sudan. She a keynote speaker at our Annual Training Forum.

FINDING THE PEACE WITHIN: MEDITATION AND CREATIVITY

BY MARGARET JONES CALLAHAN, M.A., RCC, RAT, SHAMBHALA ART TEACHER AND
MEDITATION INSTRUCTOR



If we want to work towards a sane society and to engage the violence in our communities, then we must begin by finding the natural peace within ourselves. Violence is a truncation of the human mind. When we act aggressively we close down and we

cut off from the natural peace within ourselves. We interrupt our creative flow.

Anxiety and aggression narrow our range of possibilities. They limit our movements and close our senses. Metaphorically we say we are "blind with rage." When our senses close down, our capacity for empathy decreases. We may conceptually understand the other person, but our emotional and energetic sympathy for their situation isn't evoked.

Going beyond our personal aggression and anger requires courage. We also need stability to pursue a personal quest for peace, that is a personal search for deeper meaning in one's life. I believe that such a quest is the basis for finding a lasting happiness and joy in life. We need the base of a personal confidence that comes from both knowing who we are and trusting our deepest being.

It may seem paradoxical to begin with oneself as a first step toward helping others heal from the violence and aggression in their lives, but any conscious decision to change or to grow within a relationship begins there: with connecting to me. To pursue a deep and lasting

inner peace requires the personal courage to know who we are.


We have hardened our minds. Our mind is based in old habits of thought and strong feelings, strong emotional "hooks," deeply held beliefs, and many unexplored assumptions about others and ourselves. Meditation helps us clear the inner clutter and open a fresh space for new experience. The openness and gentleness of the meditation practice begins to soften our hardened mind and we develop a resilience and flexibility that allows us to change and to transform our relationships.

Recently I heard Azim Khamisa tell the story of his personal transformation, of going beyond murder and grief to love and friendship – from investment banking and power to peace-educator and forgiveness-activist. His son, Tariq, was a victim of a gang-initiation murder. Tariq was a university student and was simply delivering a pizza the night he was shot. Azim had recently reconnected with Tariq and they were developing a caring, adult relationship. Through the court process, Azim met the grandfather of Tony, the 17-year-old youth who had murdered his son. He and Tony's grandfather began to talk. Azim said he had to reach very deeply, past his pain and his grief, to hear the other man's grief and the other family's pain. But he did this. He meditated, and he talked. He saw that there were victims on both sides of the gun. For him, his spiritual practice gave him the container, or method, for going deep within himself and it gave him the stability to be able to look beyond his pain.

The night I heard Azim speak, three mothers of Columbine High School victims were in the audience. All three had similar stories of forgiveness. All of these

people, Azim, Tony's grandfather, Tony, and the mothers from Columbine have found a way to express their desire for non-violence by going into grade schools and talking with children and by doing public speaking.

Azim's transformation exemplifies a creative approach to a profound tragedy. Our creativity unfolds naturally when we apply mindfulness to our everyday lives and to the conflicts we are experiencing.

We begin by connecting to ourselves through meditation or another mindfulness practice. This means contacting our bodies, our thoughts, our sensations, and our emotions. Then by opening and letting go, we can deepen that contact. We soften and open into the spacious quality of our hearts and a fresh and clear knowing arises. The opening process softens us – softens the hardened quality of our thoughts. We become more resilient and flexible people. You could say we become bigger people. A natural peace arises in our heart-mind. Our own anger has less influence over us. We are less controlled by our anger and fear. We begin to see and empathize with the person who is angry toward us. I call this the awakened heart. In my seminars, we explore mindfulness and creativity in order to connect with our tender and awake heart, and to develop the confidence and strength to actively express it in our lives. This is our ground for transforming the violence in our lives. 

Following the training forum, Margaret will be presenting a 2-day workshop using this approach to explore trauma and shame: the workshop is Mask and Mirror: The Many Faces of Shame, Dec. 1-2 at the Justice Institute of BC. You can contact Margaret at truepnt@yahoo.ca or 902-404-1906.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT: www.endingviolence.org
or e-mail: bcasvaccp@endingviolence.org

SEXUAL ASSAULT AND COORDINATION: GOLDEN RESPONDS TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

In our three newsletters for 2006, the Association profiles projects across the province that are coordinating their responses to sexual assault—that is, bringing different sectors together to improve services for women who have been sexually assaulted.

Golden is located in southeastern BC and has a population of about 7500, including the surrounding rural area.

Laurie Dalzell, Administrator of the Golden Women's Resource Centre (GWRC), says that recent work to address sexual exploitation of Golden area youth has "re-established and strengthened coordination in Golden."

The Golden Women's Resource Centre team is part of a coordinated response to sexual assault & exploitation. From left: Karen Wilson, Safe Homes; Laurie Dalzell, Administrator; Sara Davis, Outreach Coordinator



Last year the GWRC received funding from Status of Women Canada to research the extent of sexual exploitation in their community. The researcher found that young women and girls were experiencing both assault and exploitation: i.e. exchanging sexual acts for drugs or other "favours."

In February 2006, the GWRC presented the results of their research to the community in a public presentation. They asked community members to sign up for a focus group that would meet three times, or a feedback group that would meet once. Most people at the presentation signed up for and came to one of these follow up groups.

The focus group included representatives from Victim Services, Public Health, the Family Centre and Safe Homes. The group made initial recommendations and compiled them to present to the feedback group. At the feedback group the purpose was to gain broader community input. There were about 20 people attending: the people from the focus group as well as representatives from the RCMP, the alternate school (teachers and a student) and town council. The group also included a lawyer, some mothers, and other concerned members of the community. The feedback group brainstormed strategies for the short and long term, as well as solutions that would be possible in an ideal world.

The focus group then met again in April and refined the material from the feedback group into "actionable" goals. These included groups for girls, public education, a youth centre and the Sexual Assault Response Map Project. Laurie wrote a grant proposal based on these ideas and submitted it to the Community Capacity Building Project Fund of the Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee on Prostitution and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth through the MPSSG. She was successful in obtaining funds to start the Map Project and to run a girls' group. She got additional funds from the Golden and District Community Foundation.

The Sexual Assault Response Map Project involves outlining the process that a survivor of sexual assault would go through to access services. Laurie began by interviewing the RCMP, the Chief of Staff at the hospital, Victim Services, the Family Centre, the alternate school counsellor and the Safe Homes coordinator. The participants then discussed the results as a group. It turned out that bringing everyone together in the same room led to a strong spirit of collaboration. The group also benefitted from the fact that a young woman who had recently been sexually assaulted gave permission to the GWRC to share her experience as an example of how agencies responded to her situation. As Laurie wrote in a report to the community, "The willingness to participate and the cooperation that the collaborating agencies have already shown are amazing. It is a true indication of the whole community's desire to make sure that a women who is sexually assaulted is well supported, no matter what path she chooses to take."

Before the Map Project ends in January, the GWRC hopes to have created:

- Ongoing dialogue and support among responders
- Sheets that outline contact info and mandates of responders
- Information given to the public through a handout or forum

At this point, Laurie's main hope is to keep the community coordination going. The sexual exploitation issue got people involved and has already led to stronger connections and a more coordinated response. ☒

Based on an interview with Laurie Dalzell, Administrator, Golden Women's Resource Centre. To find out more about this project, contact Laurie at mtnwomyn@uniserve.com or 250.344.5317.

INITIATIVES, PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Visit from Japanese Police

In October, the Japanese Consulate organized ten police officers from Japan to come to Vancouver to gather information about victim services in BC. Victim services in Japan are all staffed by police officers; there are no independent programs. The officers met with E Division and VSCPD staff as well as the Association. We provided information about our work, the work of CBVAPs and the relationship between CBVAPs and PBVAPs, as well as about our CCWS Program and community coordination. We were very pleased to be able to include two CBVAP coordinators in our meeting who are of Japanese heritage: Hiromi Gibson of Vancouver Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services and Setsuko Hirose of MOSAIC. Setsuko and Hiromi were able to provide a frontline perspective, and Setsuko also gave an historical overview of the Vancouver Violence Against Women Coordination Committee. We have been told by the consulate that the officers were very pleased with the information they received. Many thanks to Hiromi and Setsuko for taking the time to attend and bring the issues alive.

STV Counsellors Core Training 2007— A FEW SPOTS STILL AVAILABLE!

The STV Counselling Core Training will be held February 5-8, March 5-8 and April 16-19 in Vancouver. Tuition is \$600 for 12 days of training and travel subsidies are available at 90% of costs. There are a few spots still available; interested counsellors should contact Susan as soon as possible. This training will be the pilot of our newly revised curriculum developed in 2006 and will utilize the STV Counselling Best Practices Manual as a foundation for many of the teaching units.

EMDR Training April-June 2007

The Association will be coordinating an EMDR training for STV counsellors with a feminist EMDR trainer who has many years experience in providing trauma counselling and supervision to the anti-violence sector. The training will take place over six days, is open to all STV counsellors, and includes supervision of the participants as they progress through the modules. Dates: April 27, 28; May 24, 25, 26; June 21, 22, 23 (six days of training and two days of consultation). Cost \$900, no travel subsidies. Contact Susan to be placed on a waitlist.

Best Practices Approaches: Child Protection and Violence Against Women

The Association has worked in partnership with the BCIAFV, BC Women's Hospital, the BC/YSTH and MCFD to develop a set of Best Practice Guidelines for child protection workers dealing with domestic violence cases. As a follow up to that, we developed and submitted a proposal to MCFD to develop training for child protection workers and anti-violence staff based on the MCFD Best Practices document. Together these partners received word that MCFD will be proceeding to fund this project. The Association will be managing this project, and has begun to work collaboratively with partners to survey MCFD workers, consult with other key stakeholders and develop the curriculum.

STV Counsellor Core Training Curriculum Revision

The STV Counsellor Core Training curriculum has been continually revised from an operational standpoint since 1993 based on the changes that have occurred in the field and from the guidelines established through the STV Counselling Draft program standards document. As well, the curriculum has always reflected the input and suggestions of many STV Counsellors. This year, however, we have overhauled the training so that it incorporates now a deep analysis of oppressions and teaches skills and competencies in working with women from many cultures and diverse communities. We also are linking the training with the new STV Counselling Programs Best Practice Manual, a new resource for the counsellors that contains the latest and best research on all the issues facing the programs and the women they serve.

STV Outreach Supportive Counselling Training

The Association is in the planning stages of providing one four-day training to STV Outreach workers in the spring of 2007. The training will consist of a shortened version of the STV Counsellor training. Training will be provided on a cost recovery basis for tuition costs with no subsidies available for travel and accommodation. An expression of interest will be going out to programs soon.

Management Training For Women and Victim Serving Agencies

This training, developed in partnership with the BC/YSTH, was successfully piloted in June and will be offered through the JIBC next year. Watch for further details.

Survey re Wages and Benefits

The results of the STV Counselling and CBVAP program wage and benefit survey that we conducted have been compiled and are available through our office. Programs have been requesting information for some time and it will be valuable for programs to use in future planning and funding initiatives.

STV Counselling Program Best Practices Manual Development Project

Consultants Maggie Ziegler and Maureen McEvoy, along with an advisory committee of STV counsellors and administrators, developed the manual. Thanks to MCS for partial funding of this project. The resulting best practices respond to priority questions and concerns from STV counsellors that have arisen in their work with women who are, for example, using drugs or alcohol, coping with mental health issues, charged with a criminal offence, mothers of abused children, abused in a lesbian relationship, mandated to counselling by MCFD, suicidal, or minors. The manual will also assist programs in addressing questions and inconsistencies that have arisen regarding such issues as wait lists, case-loads, external and inter-program referrals, and "administrative" versus "direct service" work. All STV Counselling programs have now received this document. Please call the office if you have not. In a recent evaluation of our publications, STV counsellors said that the manual very helpful. One worker said it was "an excellent resource and guide that will help our work with clients and in developing agency policy."

Older Women's Project

For many years now, the BC/YSTH has been working to develop awareness and resources that relate to abuse and violence experienced by older women. The latest piece of work is the development of a Best Practices Guide. The Association was asked to join this advisory and is presently engaged in providing feedback.

Advisory Circle for the Provincial Review of Assaultive Men's Services

The Association participated in the first meeting of the Advisory Circle for the Provincial Review of Assaultive Men's Services being conducted by Ending Relationship Abuse. We were successful in putting forth suggestions for gender specific

language in their statement of values and will continue to inform the project in terms of what is happening in front line programs. Subsequently we have linked various STV Counselling and Outreach programs that wish to participate in the focus groups to the lead researcher.

Pacific Association of First Nations Women (PAFNW) Partnership

Work has continued with PAFNW. We are very proud to stand up with the women of the PAFNW and work as their ally, along with BC Women's (Hospital) to create responses in BC to the unacceptable levels of violence BC Aboriginal Women continue to experience. During this fall we assisted the PAFNW to hold a third gathering to bring together senior government staff at the Deputy and ADM level with senior Aboriginal women to talk about the First Nations Trust and the \$100 Million in funding for First Nations. Discussions focused on strategies to create dialogue between Aboriginal women and the Trust. We also assisted with the development of a proposal to NCPC to conduct violence prevention programs on reserves.



Community Coordination for Women's Safety Program



CCWS Staff/Contractor Changes

Laura-Ashley Wright joined our team last month as the new Administrative Assistant, bringing excellent administrative skills and a strong background in social justice issues.

Laura says, "I'm so excited for the opportunity to be part of the Association on the CCWS team! I've been studying health and development at UBC, and it's great to work in a supportive environment where I am able to apply so many of the skills I've learned."

Community Development: Training and Support



Pam Gregg, Administrator, welcomes people to the Board Appreciation evening for the Omineca Safe Homes Society in Vanderhoof, attended by CCWS Regional Coordinators in advance of their strategic planning session with the Vanderhoof Coordination initiative.

From Port Hardy to Fernie and Fort Nelson to Surrey, CCWS continues to work with communities all over the province, many of them small, rural and isolated. We support communities who are interested in—or involved in—violence against women coordination (i.e. bringing together various sectors—police, community counselling, health, Crown, etc—to address violence against women). We help communities start new coordination initiatives as well as working with communities

that have been involved in coordination for years. We provide information packages, telephone and email support, in person training and facilitated strategic planning sessions. Contact us for more information! (See inside back cover for contact info.)

New Workshops

We have developed new workshops for coordination initiatives based on requests from across BC: “A Coordinated Response to Sexual Assault Intervention” and “Safety Planning for Coordination Initiatives.” Another new workshop, “A Dialogue on Women Who Fear Further Retaliation or Are Otherwise Known as ‘Reluctant,’” was developed for a community that was struggling to address this issue, and has now been offered to other communities as well. If you are interested in any of these workshops, contact Gail or Michelle.

Bethell/Thornett Inquest

This fall, CCWS provided support and information to those involved in the inquest into the deaths of William Jeffrey Bethell and Seth Kinser Thornett in Nanaimo, including the local CBVAP and the Coroner. It was reported that Bethell sexually assaulted his ex-wife Sarah and abducted their child before killing himself and Thornett (a four-year-old child) during the ensuing police chase.

Road Trip to the East and West Kootenays

BY GAIL EDINGER,
CCWS REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Thanks to everyone who worked to organize the workshops in Castlegar, Nelson, Creston and Invermere. And thanks too, to those folks who took time away from their work to be there. It was wonderful to see so many police, to see Crown Counsel, social workers, teachers, addictions workers, HIV/AIDS workers, mental health

workers, youth justice and probation officers all working alongside anti-violence workers with a passion for change. It was a privilege for CCWS to be part of your group, to hear your stories and struggles and to meet you all.



Cpl. Brent Ayers, RCMP, Invermere; **Carmen McDonaugh**, East Kootenay Youth Justice (Corrections), Cranbrook; **Darcy Victor**, MCFD Youth Justice; **Janice Hamilton**, Family Resource Centre, Invermere Safe Homes.



Lena Horswill, Director, Nelson Community Services; **Inspector Steve Robertson** of the Nelson RCMP; and colleagues demonstrate inter-sectoral collaboration at a CCWS workshop on “Victim Reluctance.”

Immigrant/Refugee/Non-Status Women and Violence

In March 2006 we approached a number of experts on specific policy provisions that are impeding the safety of immigrant, refugee and women without status who experience violence and asked them to consult with CCWS regarding gaps in policy. We sought this input from the Philippine Women's Center, Vancouver and Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services, MOSAIC, Battered Women's Support Services, Prince George Elizabeth Fry Society and Kamaljit Lehal, Working Group member and immigration lawyer. As a result, we have an action plan on policy issues in priority areas that CCWS is following up on.

CCWS Provincial Working Group News

The CCWS Working Group members provide input on issues that relate to their field of professional expertise and identify local and provincial strategies to help enhance coordination and implementation of violence against women policies. Issues currently under discussion at the Working Group include: specialized court response to domestic violence in BC, third party reporting for sexual assault, violence against immigrant and refugee women, Safety Issues Protocol between CCWS and RCMP and government pleadings in VAWIR cases.

Supt Byron Boucher, Officer in Charge, Enhanced Community and Aboriginal Policing Services, RCMP E Division, joined the Working Group at our May meeting, as did Georgia Peters, Criminal Justice Branch, MAG. We are thrilled to have a representative from CJB to assist us in our ongoing efforts to increase Crown involvement in coordination. The following people will join the Working Group at our November meeting:

- Frances Kelly, Lawyer, Community Legal Assistance Society: Frances comes highly recommended as a disability rights advocate, and will help us move forward in our work to reduce barriers for women with disabilities.
- Jill Cory, Coordinator, Woman Abuse Response Program, BC Women's Hospital and Health Centre: Jill has a long history of working on coordination in the anti-violence and health sectors.
- Cpl Colleen Campbell replaces Robin Bridge as the representative from "E" Division Operations Policy Unit; we look forward to continuing our excellent collaboration with the RCMP
- Leslie Page, Policy Analyst, Stopping the Violence Branch, MCS, replaces Alison Nutting as the representative from the Branch

- Mary Clifford, Executive Director of the BC/Yukon Society of Transition Houses, replaces former ED Karen Stone

Projects to Address Province Wide Issues

Third Party Reports: CCWS continues the development of a provincial protocol to allow sexual assault victims who do not wish to report to police to submit a third party report to another agency. We have brought together a task group with members from RCMP, municipal police, government and Aboriginal communities—the group is hard at work developing draft protocol and preparing a presentation to the BC Association of Chiefs of Police.

Information Sharing: With the assistance of Working Group members representing police/RCMP and MPSSG, CCWS has completed a backgrounder on Information Sharing between police and victim services. MPSSG and CCWS are also working in partnership to develop a provincial information sharing strategy to ensure that women who are at risk of domestic violence receive critical information about the accused's past violence.

New Documents

(available at www.endingviolence.org or use contact info below)

- Backgrounder: Under What Circumstances Can a Woman Get Information from Police about Her Abuser's Criminal Past?
- CCWS Services Available and Coordination Support for Communities: detailed information on how CCWS can work with communities
- New Templates and Tools for Coordination Initiatives: Leadership in Coordination Initiatives, Administrative Tasks for Coordination Initiatives and Advocacy and Coordination
- Third Party Reporting: report on our cross regional inter-sectoral discussion groups Referrals: Discussion Paper and Template
- Safety Issues Protocol: A protocol between CCWS and the RCMP for dealing with concerns about police practice that affects women's safety (see February News Bulletin for more info)
- Updated Myth Of Mutual Battering Resource List
- Updated Bios for our Working Group members
- Updated list of coordination initiatives across BC

Safe Choices – Support and Education Program

The Safe Choices program is funded by the SMART Fund of the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. The purpose is to improve the health and safety (physical, sexual, and emotional) of women in same-gender relationships by increasing options for intervention and support, and by removing barriers to health care and social services for women in abusive same-sex relationships in Vancouver. The program continues to receive many requests for training, consultation, healthy relationship workshops and writing about same-gender relationship abuse. Over the past year we have seen an increased awareness about the program in the community and we are starting to be recognized as a leader in this area locally and across the country.

Public Education

We delivered a workshop entitled “After the Honeymoon: Communication and Conflict Resolution Skills” over the summer which ten women participated in. Following the workshop we supported one woman in finding a lesbian positive psychologist to work with. We also delivered one workshop for service providers in June entitled “Making the Transition: Providing Services to Trans Survivors of Violence and Abuse in which twenty-three service providers participated. This workshop was very well received as people expressed their appreciation in being able to access information that is hard to obtain and that they felt supported in providing safe and informed service to trans survivors of violence. If your program is located in the Vancouver Coastal District, and you would like training in this area, please contact Susan at the office.

Resource Development


The program has dedicated four months of program resources to write new training modules for workshops intended for lesbian, bisexual, two spirited and transgendered women and for workshops intended for service providers. Having prepared curriculum will create a lasting legacy for the program and assist the program in recruiting and supporting additional facilitators.

LGBT Anti-Violence Network & Hate Crimes Roundtable

We continue to participate in these initiatives that bring various service providers together who work with LGBT relationship violence and hate crimes. Our meetings focus on coordination of services, collaboration and education regarding the issues arising within queer communities.

Outreach

In anticipation of resuming public education in January utilizing our newly written curriculum, we have been engaged in outreach activities with the two-spirited community, youth, and the deaf community. It is our intention to increase the visibility of Safe Choices within these three communities by utilizing facilitators from within these communities and by making stronger links to lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people who identify as two-spirited, are young or are deaf or hard of hearing.

We have initiated outreach to private practice health care professionals to introduce the Safe Choices project, and to facilitate access of their clients to the Healthy Relationships workshops and printed materials on healthy, safe relationships. 

PROGRAMS AT WORK ACROSS THE PROVINCE

Yellowhead Community Services in Clearwater and Barriere (North Thompson Valley)

BY IRENE CRICK, ART THERAPIST AND COORDINATOR OF WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

We feel a bit removed from the action up here in the North Thompson valley. Our agency, Yellowhead Community Services, is housed in a fairly new Neighborhood House here in Clearwater. The most recent event we've had was a Grand Opening on September 22, attended by Minister of State for Early Childhood, Linda Reid, and our MLA, Kevin Krueger. Our agency incorporates Women's and Children's services with Early Childhood Intervention, a challenged adults' group, a day

care center and youth drop in, as well as Mental Health and Addictions counselling. We have a satellite office and a daycare in Barriere (60 km south) as well. Barriere receives MH and Addictions counselling and part-time STV, CWWA and Sexual Abuse Intervention. As for spiritual aspects of healing...our client base is diverse in terms of spiritual practice, as all are. Our counsellors tend to encourage people to define and focus on their own spirituality, but of course we do not impose our own or others' beliefs on anyone. Our culture is quite homogeneous—some might say impoverished—but as a northern, rural small town, there are aspects that are quite different from city culture. One of these is isolation and reluctance to attend groups, due to fear of gossip and rejection. Another is the

tendency of people to connect with community members they know when they are in crisis instead of calling an agency. People are considered “newcomers” here until they have lived here 10 years or more. I have lived here 5 years, and most of my clients are newcomers’ as well. There are several churches in our area, and they are sought out for emotional and practical assistance. The United Church is probably the most socially active in terms of practical aid and because of the “Healing Touch” group there. I find that people are generally helped by their concept of spirituality, and readily express their beliefs to me, whether they are First Nations, pagan, Christian, New Age or Buddhist. Other counsellors have a holistic point of view as well, and one promotes a traditional First Nations approach.



Irene Crick at her STV/CWWA/SAIP office desk, consulting with Barriere Mental Health and Addictions counselor, Johnathan Ikebuchi.



Executive Director Jack Keough and Linda Reid, Minister of State for Child Care, at the Grand Opening of Yellowhead Community Services.



Kevin Krueger, MLA for Kamloops—North Thompson, and Linda Basran, Interior Health Community , Administrator—Thompson at the Grand Opening.

Missing Women on Highway 16 Art Exhibit

BY KATHERINE HALL, OUTREACH WORKER,
ELIZABETH FRY SOCIETY, BURNS LAKE

The Elizabeth Fry Society arranged for the Missing Women on Highway 16 Art Exhibition to come to Burns Lake for the month of August. We welcomed the show to Burns Lake by hosting an Open House at the Chamber of Commerce/Visitor Information Centre on August 11, 2006. Approximately 23 visual artists from across the northwest, including Carrie Riddle, Frank Sampson, Judy Hilgemann, Leanne Smith, Perry Rath and our own local artist Gerda Voltz, contributed work that explored violence against women and how we respond to it.

“In the summer of 2004, when I was preparing for another show, I created a sculpture of a woman I called Emily,”

explains the exhibit coordinator, Linda Stringfellow. “She kept asking where her missing granddaughters were. She has guided me to do this project; she has been the spirit behind the whole venture.”

The launch began in Smithers on April 7, 2006 and has since been to communities such as Terrace and Moricetown. The exhibition does not end in Burns Lake as there are plans to travel to Prince George (UNBC), Prince Rupert (Museum of Northern BC), and the Queen Charlotte Islands. We were very fortunate to have the art exhibition here in Burns Lake for the entire month of August. It is just as equally important that the Art Exhibition was showcased in a building that not only is frequented by many tourists and locals but is also located directly on Highway 16.

Coordinating Services with Rural Faith Communities to Stop Violence Against Women

BY NANCY TAYLOR, STV COUNSELLOR AND OUTREACH WORKER, ROBSON VALLEY HOME SUPPORT SOCIETY, MCBRIDE/VALEMOUNT, BC

"Women are not merely vaginas and breasts; women are not sex objects!" These words were uttered with passion from the pulpit by the Rev. Michael Batten at our local Montreal Massacre Vigil several years ago. He volunteered to host our event at the Robson Valley Shared Ministry (Anglican and United Churches) in Valemount and to speak on the issue of violence against women. For those of us providing services to women, these words signaled the power of the Church to join in with the STV Programs. They ignited a partnership between women's services and the Robson Valley Shared Ministry, and subsequently several other churches committed to stopping violence against women in the Robson Valley.



Some RVCCWS members from women-serving agencies (l-r): **Nancy Taylor**, STV Counsellor/Outreach Worker; **Elizabeth deVries**, Safe Shelter Coordinator-McBride, CCWA Counsellor Robson Valley; **Shelly Battensby**, Safe Shelter Coordinator - Valemount.

Initial outreach to the faith communities began by presenting information to the Valemount Inter-Ministerial Group and the McBride Pastoral Care Committee. We showed the video "Broken Vows: Religious Perspectives on Domestic Violence," which profiles the lives of five women of various religions who fled abuse. The women describe the ways in which their faith communities helped or didn't help them.

One message in the video is that the sacred marriage vows are severed when violence occurs, not when a woman leaves the relationship. When Church members embrace this notion, offenders are more likely to be held accountable and the propensity

for victim blaming is reduced. Another message the video sends is related to misinterpretations of the Scriptures that support the idea that a wife must submit to her husband. Quoting from Ephesians 5.21, 5.22 and 5.25, the narrator gives examples that indicate both husbands and wives are to be mutually subject to one another. *

We began the Robson Valley Community Coordination for Women's Safety (RVCCWS) Initiative in the fall of 2003. The RV Shared Ministry and the St. Patrick's Catholic Church in McBride have been involved in our group since the beginning. Other churches have shown a keen interest in local coordination of services as well.

Members of the RVCCWS exemplify the dual relationships we often experience in our rural community. For instance, several of our Safe Shelter Operators and hospital nursing staff are active in the McBride Evangelical Free Church, the Valemount New Life Sanctuary and other churches in the community. The participation

of the churches has created a balance between community-based and systems-based responders in RVCCWS. This makes our group more representative of the community as a whole and of the diversity we embrace in our work together.

As many women turn to their churches for support, the faith communities in the Robson Valley are a valuable resource in our efforts to stop violence against women. Our quarterly RVCCWS meetings inform systems and community responders who are also church members by emphasizing the importance of three things:

- a coordinated community response to violence in intimate relationships
- victim safety and offender accountability
- using local, secular, women's services for referrals, information and support

I would like to share parts of a letter that was written in response to a query from a local nurse. She requested information from her pastor about how the Evangelical Free Church would respond to incidents of physical abuse. Her pastor then asked for feedback on the Evangelical Free Church Pastor's Listserv. The following tips on "crisis intervention" came from Dr. John Auxier of ACTS Seminaries at Trinity Western University**:

"In the case of serious protracted domestic violence, pastoral care issues are often more about protecting and supporting the victim rather than saving the relationship. In these cases the

question of the continuation of the marriage arises, raising Biblical and theological issues for the abused wife if she is a Christian. Some reflections:

- Counselling someone to seek a separation due to a pattern of domestic violence, or to go to a shelter in a crisis, is not the equivalent of condoning divorce. It is a statement that the abuse is no longer acceptable, and repentance and accountability are called for.
- Marriage is a solemn covenant before God. However, marriage vows don't give the spiritual right to tell one's mate to lie down on a railroad track so a train can run over them. Domestic violence violates clearly Biblical teaching and threatens even the precious gift of life itself.



Some RVCCWS religious community members: Intern **Rob Smith** and **Rev. Dee McEachren**, Robson Valley Shared Ministry, Anglican/United

Why Domestic Violence is Wrong

To a wide degree, most pastors of all communions are committed to trying to preserve marriages and avoid divorce, whenever possible. However, there are other competing Biblical values to be considered in domestic violence that are as important in pastoral care of this problem as well.

- Attacking one's spouse physically is an indirect assault on the Imago Dei or "the image of God," which every human being represents according to Genesis 1:27. This is the reason that the sin of murder is so strongly condemned in Genesis 9:6. The intention behind habitual pathological domestic violence can be viewed as an approximation of murder, a desire to exert total control over a person, body soul and spirit, turning them from a worthy image bearer into an object to be controlled, denigrated or even destroyed.
- Domestic violence is personal sin that contradicts God's calling in the perpetrator's individual spiritual life (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness and self-control; Galatians 5:22-23), and is the opposite of the respectful love between husbands and wives as brothers and sisters in Christ which we are called to have. It is clearly outside of God's will and not only an act of disrespect to their mate but an act of rebellion against God. It is no accident that the specific list of "acts of the sinful nature" or "fruit of the flesh" in Galatians 5:19-21 include classic domestic violence behavior such as "discord," "jealousy" and "fits of rage."
- God loves justice and is the protector of the innocent. Whatever one's position on roles in marriage, domestic

violence and child abuse are counter to both Old and New Testament teaching. Micah 6:8 reminds us, "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly before your God." Abusing power over another person is not godly leadership in the home. Physically abusing loved ones who are dependent or less able to defend themselves is unjust, and dominating others is arrogant.

- Domestic violence brings dishonour to Christ and the Christian community. The church is God's "spiritual bride" according to the Apostle Paul in the book of Ephesians, Chapter 5. Can you imagine Jesus Christ abusing his bride, the Church? Never. So it is that domestic violence should not be tolerated by the Church. According to Jesus (John 13: 34-35), relationships in the Church are to be marked above all else by love: "A new command I give you: Love one another...All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another." When the Church tolerates or ignores domestic violence, we are condoning sin, tarnishing the reputation of Jesus' followers and undermining the Gospel message in our communities.


For all these reasons and more, the Church should take domestic violence seriously as a significant sin problem. Pastors should preach at least yearly on the issue, get basic training on how to help effectively, and support Christian ministries and social services for abused women and children."

Building connections with the faith communities in the Robson Valley through coordination of services has revealed

a wealth of shared knowledge and understanding. Together we are creating new knowledge that can only serve to improve our response to women and children living with violence. The chasms that seem to divide us are often a result of misunderstandings and assumptions while the common ground on which we stand is solid. I believe we can create peace within our communities, our families and within ourselves through strong partnerships and a coordinated response to violence against women.

**A useful discussion guide is included with the video; both are available on loan through the BC/Yukon Society of Transition Houses Library.*

***Excerpt from "Some Guidelines for Pastors in Responding to Domestic Violence in the Church"*

We are midway through the World Council of Churches' "Decade to Overcome Violence 2001-2010," and awareness for some is greater, and yet for others violence seems on the increase. As the Christian Church holds out the tenet from Tobit 4:12: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," it seems to get lost. Much more the case is "do unto others as they have done unto you." We know that violence begets violence. How then do we say "ENOUGH?" I am delighted to be part of the BCASVACP's Training Forum, where religious and secular institutions come together to develop an understanding of each other and processes in which we can work towards peace in our homes. For if there is peace in our homes there is peace in society. Front-line workers, caregivers and those abused all need spiritual nurturing. We have much to do. Thank you to BCASVACP for providing this training forum. —*Deirdre McEachern, Robson Valley Shared Ministry, Valemount & McBride, BC (Deirdre will be participating in a panel at the Training Forum)* 

INFORMATION BULLETIN: VICTIM SERVICES AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS DIVISION, MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SOLICITOR GENERAL

BY VSCPD STAFF



In our effort to enhance communication and information sharing, the Division's Program Managers have produced this inaugural information-sharing bulletin. The purpose is to provide both contractors and victim service programs with updates and information relevant to victim service programs and victim service workers. We would appreciate any feedback you may have on the usefulness of these bulletins, as well as any suggestions for improved and continued communication between the Division, contracted agencies and victim service programs.

Division Staff Extensions

Steve Ford has been extended as a Policy and Program Analyst with the Division. We are pleased to advise that Erin Arnold will continue in her role as Program Manager for Vancouver Island and Interior regions.

Victim Service Program Staff Changes and Leaves

In the event of any staffing changes within your victim service program, we ask that you advise us of these changes in writing. This information will help us keep our contact list up to date and also keeps us informed as to whom we contact if we have any questions.

Coordination and Protocol

As you are aware, the topic of referral protocols between police and community based victim service programs was one of the issues raised in the Coroner's inquest held in Nanaimo in August 2006. We would like to take this opportunity to remind those communities with both a police-based and community-based victim service program of the need to have in place a local

protocol detailing consistent referral procedures that are adhered to. For those communities that do not have protocols in place, or for those communities that are in the process of revising/updating existing protocols, please contact your Program Manager at the Division if you have any questions or require guidance through this process. We would appreciate hearing from those communities who have protocols in place that are working well and of your willingness to share your protocol with other communities who are in the process of developing or revising a referral protocol. Victim Service programs in communities with both a police-based and community-based program are to send in their current referral protocol, as required in Appendix A of the contract, and indicate when it was last reviewed and updated by both programs. Please forward the protocol document to your Program Manager at the Division.

OPRA

An OPRA Overview, as well as a Definitions Guide, has been distributed to all victim service programs in the province. The OPRA system is currently being piloted with the OPRA Resource Group which consists of a cross-section of thirteen community based and police based programs from various parts of the province. The pilot is taking place between June and November 2006 to provide feedback and suggestions for future improvements. OPRA is to be upgraded and enhanced twice per year. The Justice Institute is developing a training CD-Rom to familiarize users with OPRA's status entry functions and procedures. Feedback regarding OPRA is encouraged and can be sent to opra@gov.bc.ca. Scott Fogden is currently backfilling for Sheri Landles. Scott is the contact person for OPRA and can be reached at 604-660-3697 or scott.fogden@gov.bc.ca.

Outreach Integration Project

The Division collaborated with the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance to deliver a pilot program in the communities of Abbotsford, Langley and Mission. The six-month pilot was coordinated by Abbotsford Community Services Society, and designed to facilitate information sharing and effective client referrals. Several information sessions to educate community partners about the services and resources that each Ministry offers have taken place. The pilot program ran until the end of September 2006 and follow up evaluations

are being conducted. So far, the feedback has been great. Based on the evaluations and feedback, we may explore expansion of the program to other parts of the province. In addition, we will be able to share information and provide templates/referral process ideas to you for use in your communities.

Resource Update

The Division is pleased to announce that the VictimLINK multilingual poster and the 05/06 Division-wide Activity Report was released in October 2006. Distribution of the Violence Against Women in Relationships and Sexual Assault Victim Service Worker handbooks will soon follow. Earlier this year, the following resources were sent to programs:

- Help Starts Here Information Kit, which includes a general Information Booklet for victims of crime and information sheets on:
 - Sexual Assault
 - Abuse and Neglect of Older Adults
 - Improving the experience of victims and witnesses in court
 - Making it easier for young victims and witnesses to testify
 - Youth Dating Violence
 - If your Child is a Victim of Crime
 - Video and DVD Resources
 - Let's Go to Court
 - Your Voice in Criminal Court
 - In Her Own Time

For a complete list of our publications and to request an order, please check our website:

http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victim_services/publications/index.htm.

Thank you for your continuing patience and support while we work towards completing resources for victim service programs.

Help Starts Here Resource Series Survey Results:

Thank you to those who responded to the survey on the *Help Starts Here* resource series. Your feedback was greatly appreciated and will guide us in the development of additional information sheets. Overall, the response to the resource series was very positive and many of you indicated that the materials produced to date are useful and informative resources for victims. Some expressed a preference for brochures and indicated that the information sheets are hard to display due to their size. The decision to produce

information sheets vs. brochures was made taking into consideration the following factors: printing costs, PDF format and print readiness and photocopy reproduction quality. The top three requested subjects for future information sheets were: sudden death, break and enter/home invasion and spousal assault. The Division will be working on the content development for these information sheets over the coming months.

Coordinated Risk Management and Victim Safety in Spousal Abuse Cases:

In February 2005 the MPSSG issued the Police Release Guidelines on a Promise to Appear. The guidelines are an amendment to the Violence Against Women in Relationships Policy and the RCMP VIR policy. The key recommendations include: documentation of offender risks; correct completion of PTA and UTA forms; ensuring that the victim is notified and receives a copy of the release conditions; and referral to victim services. Training on risk assessment and the new PTA Guidelines has been held in Elk Valley, Prince George, the Lower Mainland and Victoria. A training bulletin was sent to all police detachments in March 2005. In addition the Ministry is working to develop a BSAFER police training and administration website. BSAFER (Brief Spousal Abuse Form for Evaluating Risk) will support police in investigating and identifying abuser actions that increase a woman's risk of being abused or decrease her level of safety. The BSAFER training website will be piloted this fall with province wide implementation in 2007. This website is for police only.

Aid for Safety Assessment and Planning (ASAP):

After 4 years of extensive research, review and testing, ASAP will be launched this fall. ASAP is a detailed manual and sample worksheet to assist in victim safety assessment and planning. ASAP incorporates established tools such as BSAFER used by police in investigation and SARA (Spousal Assault Risk Assessment) used by Probation. There are 12 safety support factors which need to be considered when assessing the safety needs of women and developing a comprehensive safety plan. The Division is currently working with the Justice Institute and BCIFV to develop an ASAP orientation website for launch in 2007. ASAP, SARA and BSAFER combined will encourage

greater coordination between all justice partners and take us one step further to improving the safety of women and children in BC. For further Information Please contact jane.coombe@gov.bc.ca.

Proposed Criminal Code Amendments:

In June of 2006, the federal Minister of Justice introduced An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (criminal procedure, language of the accused, sentencing and other amendments). Bill C-23 proposes a number of amendments that address criminal procedure, sentencing and language rights. One amendment would provide the power to order an offender not to communicate with identified persons while in custody, and the creation of an offence for failing to comply with the order, thereby enhancing protection of victims. The Minister also introduced Bill C-22, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (age of protection) which proposes increasing the age of consent to 16 from 14. Close-in-age exceptions have been included in the legislation to protect against the criminalization of consensual teenage sex. This exception would apply to 14 and 15 year old youths who engage in non-exploitative sexual activity with a partner who is less than five years older. Both of these Bills are at the First Reading stage. For more information please refer to the news bulletins at this link: <http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/news/index.html>.

Gaming Information:


Following up on our Regional Meeting, many programs inquired about the Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. The website can be located at: <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/gaming/>. The phone # for information regarding funding is 250 387-5311.

Questions or Concerns?

Please contact your program manger:

Elizabeth Murtagh (Fraser Valley, Lower Mainland)
ph: 604-660-5124; Elizabeth.Murtagh@gov.bc.ca

Eliza Li (Fraser Valley, North)
ph: 604-660-3904; Eliza.Li@gov.bc.ca

Erin Arnold (Island and Interior)
ph: 604-660-2527; Erin.Arnold@gov.bc.ca 

STOPPING THE VIOLENCE BRANCH, MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH HONOURS ABORIGINAL WOMEN IN B.C.
(EXCERPT FROM OCTOBER 17, 2006 NEWS RELEASE)

October is Women's History Month. Established in 1992 by the Government of Canada and proclaimed by British Columbia to recognize and celebrate exceptional women of the past, present and future, this month provides an opportunity to learn more about women's accomplishments and their contributions to Canadian society. This year, the national theme for Women's History Month is Aboriginal Women: The Journey Forward. As part of a month-long salute to British Columbia's Aboriginal women, 10 women are being recognized for their achievements in the following five categories:

Language, Culture and the Arts

Honouree: Sophie Thomas

Sophie Thomas is a Carrier Elder in her nineties. She is the mother of 15 children, 35 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren. Taught by her grandmother about natural medicines and care of the land, Sophie has been an environmental activist and a sought-after speaker in schools, universities and international conferences for more than 20 years. A former chief of the Stoney Creek Band and founding member of the Stoney Creek Child Welfare Committee, Sophie was awarded 1993 Woman of the Year by the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council and is the subject of a Terry Jacks video documentary filmed in 2000, called *The Warmth of Love*. She has retained her traditional First Nations knowledge of medicinal plants and remains the primary healer for many First Nations and non-First Nations peoples.

Honourable Mention: Jessie Hamilton

Jessie Hamilton, 83, has spent her life serving the Hupacasath community. Currently, she is documenting the Hupacasath language, and over the years she has contributed to language books, tapes, CDs and DVDs to help preserve the dialect for future generations. She also put together a curriculum for the Nuuchah-nulth language. As the daughter of hereditary Chief Dan Watts, running the community came naturally for Jessie. She became one of the first women chiefs in her community, and served for 10 years. Jessie is renowned for her knowledge of the history, place names, protocol and the people of the Hupacasath, her command of oral history and her dedicated, active involvement in the Port Alberni community.

Family and Community

Honouree: Gertrude Guerin (posthumous award)

Gertrude Guerin (nee Ettershank) was born into the Squamish Nation in the village of Mission, B.C. in 1917. The first woman to be elected chief of a First Nation in Canada, Gertrude's nickname, "old war horse," stuck with her, even 20 years after she left politics. In 1936, Gertrude married Victor Guerin of Musqueam and together they raised four children in North Vancouver before moving to Musqueam Nation in 1954. There, Gertrude became an advocate for the Musqueam people, especially around issues of fairness and non-discrimination in the school system. She was the founder of the Vancouver Friendship Centre and played key roles in founding the Vancouver Police Liaison Society and the Native Education Centre. Although she passed on in 1998, Gertrude is remembered for her strength, determination and love for her people.

Honourable Mention: Jackie Finnie

Jackie Finnie is a Métis Elder who is active in many community programs; Friday's Child, a program for parents of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome children; Aboriginal Head Start; and the Na'aaltasi School. A former Board Elder for the Wachiay Friendship Centre, Jackie serves on the Board for the Courtenay Legion Auxiliary and also helps promote healthy living for the Korean Veterans. She works with various school districts in B.C. to promote Métis culture and is an active Elder for the MIK'SIW Métis Association in the Comox Valley.

Health, Sports and Science

Honouree: Rose Johnston

Born into the Nak'azdli Band in 1936, Rose graduated from the St. Paul's Nursing Program in 1950, married Len Johnston of the Squamish Nation in 1959 and retired at age 68 from a 45-year career as a registered nurse. Her involvement and influence in sports and athletics is reflected in her 20 years as manager and pitcher of a softball team and 10 years as manager of a girls' basketball team. Rose currently serves on the Squamish Nation Health Committee. She is well respected as a foster parent and role model for students and athletes alike.

Honourable Mention: Rose Bortolon

Rose Bortolon is a resident of Prince George and Minister of Health for the Métis Nation BC. She has worked with the Métis as a volunteer since the 1970s. Rose works on behalf of the elders in her community and in B.C. on many fronts, including housing, health, culture and language. A volunteer for the 2005 Seniors Games, Rose was also a nominee for Citizen of the Year in Prince George. Rose is the mother of four daughters and grandmother of four. A woman of great strength and perseverance, she has risen above her own challenges and dedicated much of her life to ensuring the most vulnerable members of our communities have access to programs and services they need.

Education

Honouree: Christa Williams

A member of the Nlaka'pamux Nation, Christa Williams achieved a Bachelor of Science degree, with honours, from Queen's University. Christa's ongoing commitment to Aboriginal education is reflected by her active involvement and leadership in the First Nations Education Steering Committee; the BC Aboriginal Education Partners Group; the National Indian Education Committee of the AFN and the national Education Policy Framework. Christa recently played a key role in the negotiations of the Agreement in First Nations Education in B.C. signed by First Nations, provincial and federal representatives, which recognizes the right of First Nations peoples to make decisions about the education of their learners.

Honourable Mention: Kim Hodgson

Kim Hodgson is a teacher and a tireless advocate for children in need of special education. She uses her creativity and enthusiasm to help students understand their cultural heritage and appreciate and respect each other. Kim is


always quick to extend a helping hand to those in need. She is president of the Tri-River Métis Association and volunteers many hours promoting Métis culture and wellness. Kim organizes events and workshops for youth and elders and has a kind word and a smile for everyone she meets.

Public Service, Business and Entrepreneurship

Honouree: Jean Peerless

An inspirational Métis leader and Métis elder, Jean Peerless has been active as a community leader and Métis politician in the Peace Region for many years. One of the first women elected as a Métis leader, Jean is a tenacious and vocal advocate for Métis rights and recognition, a generous volunteer, a creative problem-solver and inspiration to all in her community. Always keeping her focus on the needs of the elders, as well as those who struggle to meet basic needs, Jean is a true community hero. As one of her community members in Fort St. John stated, "She keeps our community together, where would we be without her!"

Honourable Mention: Geri Collins

Geri Collins is an exceptional leader who has dedicated her life work to many whom she does not even know. She is passionately committed to ensuring programs and services are available and accessible to all with Aboriginal ancestry. Geri has worked with Community Futures Development Corp. of Central Interior First Nations for 16 years and has built a professional staff that is accountable to the communities and clients it serves. Her work associations include the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, the National Association of Friendship Centres and national recognition through the Canadian Association of Native Development Officers. 

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT: www.endingviolence.org
or e-mail: bcasvaccp@endingviolence.org

VICTIM SAFETY UNIT UPDATE

Victim Safety Unit Staff

We are pleased to welcome Tanya Cacic back from maternity leave. Tanya is currently working Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Anita Lee, who has worked as a specialized Victim Service Worker and with VictimLINK, was replacing Tanya and will be with us for a short time longer until Tanya settles back in. Michelle Trigardi, formerly with Burnaby Police Based Victim Services is replacing Eva Esmann who is at home with her new baby (congrats Eva!) and her other son.

We welcome your feedback, questions or concerns.

Karen Spears, Manager, Victim Safety Unit, 604-660-0333/
1-877-316-8822, Karen.spears@gov.bc.ca

Michelle Trigardi/ Tanya Cacic/ Anita Lee, Caseworkers,
Victim Safety Unit, 604-660-0316/1-877-315-8822,
vsusg@gov.bc.ca

Court Information Updates

At the recent Regional Roundtable meetings, a number of victim service programs again raised the issue of the inability to access court information updates in a timely manner. We understand the importance of access to timely and accurate court information and would like to take this opportunity to provide information about the services which the Victim Safety Unit provides in relation to court updates. The Victim Safety Unit provides information to victims or their representatives under Sections 6 and 7 of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) regardless of whether or not the victim is registered with the Victim Safety Unit.

NEW:

Court Information—General Enquires

Victim Safety Unit staff respond to general enquires from victims or their victim service workers and can provide court update and B.C. Corrections information, as per Sections 6 and 7 of VOCA for adult accused and offenders. As part of our process, we ask identifying questions (names, court file # and location) and once we have determined that we are speaking with the victim or their representative, we will provide the court update information (subject to any ban on publication), regardless of whether or not the victim is registered with the Victim Safety Unit. Court updates include information such as court results and next court dates. Victims and victim service workers are welcome to phone the Victim Safety Unit to receive court update information: 604-660-0316 or 1-877-315-8822.

Court Information – Victim Safety Unit Registrants

If an accused or offender is being supervised by B.C. Corrections, either in custody (jail) or the community (bail, probation), it may be appropriate for the victim to also be registered for notification with the Victim Safety Unit. Registration means that the Victim Safety Unit will monitor and pro-actively contact victims with notifications regarding the offender.

Court notifications as they relate to the custody status of the adult offender are automatically provided. For example, if an accused is being held in provincial custody and the court result leads to the accused's release, we notify the registered victim.

Upon request, we can also provide notifications regarding court outcomes which are not necessarily linked to custody status. If a registered victim is involved with their local victim service program, the Victim Safety Unit can provide the notifications to the victim service worker, the victim, or both.

Notifications Regarding Offenders

Victims of crime may register with the Victim Safety Unit to be kept up-to-date on their accused and offenders who are being supervised by B.C. Corrections. The accused or offender does not have to be in custody (provincial jail) in order for the victim to register. We are connected to CORNET, the B.C. Corrections database and can notify registrants about offender custody (jail) or community (probation, bail) movements or changes as soon as they are entered into the system. Examples of movements include releases, admissions, transfers (both custody and community) and applications for parole. Civil restraining order protected parties with significant safety concerns can also apply to register for notification with the Victim Safety Unit. We will be able to notify the registrant when the defendant is going to be released from provincial custody.

Victim Safety Unit staff phone registrants with notifications during regular business hours. After hours release from custody notifications (weekend "sentence end" releases, releases at court, releases on parole and escapes) are provided by VictimLINK, the Ministry's province wide, 24-hour information, support and referral service.

Occasionally, we still get questions about or applications for VINE. VINE is the old notification system which used a computer-generated voice to deliver notifications. The Victim Safety Unit staff (with help from VictimLINK) now provide

these notifications personally. If you have any old VINE forms, you are welcome to recycle them.


A victim or civil restraining order party can register by phoning the Victim Safety Unit or completing the on-line registration form, then faxing or mailing the form in. A victim service worker may also call to get the registration started. If an offender is sentenced to custody for two years or longer, victims must register with Correctional Services Canada. They can be reached, toll free, at 1-888-999-8828.

Parole Changes

Recently, information was provided to victim service programs regarding changes to parole. Currently, parole hearings for offenders in provincial custody (sentences of less than two years) are heard by the B.C. Board of Parole and parole hearings for offenders in federal custody (sentences of two years or more) are held by the National Parole Board. Effective April 1, 2007, the B.C. Board of Parole will be eliminated and hearings for provincially sentenced offenders will be heard by the National Parole Board. The Victim Services and Community Programs

Division is involved with this transition to ensure that the needs of victims are met. Karen Spears is a member of the Victims Working Group. The Victim Safety Unit currently provides notification to registrants regarding parole related events, including: application for parole, parole hearing date, parole results and if applicable, release from custody, community admissions, community transfers and re-admissions to custody. We also administer the Victim Travel Fund which provides funding for victims, their immediate family members, and in some cases, a support person, to attend and participate in the parole hearing. There are some similarities and some differences between the current provincial and federal parole systems. We will keep you up to date regarding this parole transition.

Webpage

This is a reminder to bookmark the Victim Safety Unit webpage. It has our Registration form, Notifications, Frequently Asked Questions and information about the Victim Travel Fund: www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victim_services/notification/index.htm. 

BC'S HUMAN TRAFFICKING RESPONSE INITIATIVE

BY ROBIN E PIKE

Background

Global trafficking in human beings is now reported to be the second most lucrative source of income for organized crime, following drug trafficking and ahead of gun smuggling. United Nations estimates of the movement of human trafficking victims worldwide range from 900,000 to 4 million individuals annually, with most being women and young girls. Canada is not immune.

Victims of human trafficking experience extreme violations of their human rights and dignity through exploitation for sexual and labour purposes. Trafficking in persons, or "modern day slavery," is a new (but old) phenomenon for communities and governments to tackle, and the clandestine and invisible nature of this global crisis makes it difficult to assess on a local basis.

This country has been identified as both a transit and destination point, with Vancouver in particular singled out by the US State Department as a port of major concern in the movement of trafficked persons. Canada's first human trafficking trial took place in Vancouver in the spring of 2006, and involved two women trafficked into the country with false promises of employment. Once here, they were held against their will, their documents were confiscated, and they were forced into prostitution. They ultimately escaped from their traffickers and called 911.

In May 2005, the Victims Services and Community Programs Division of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (MPSSG) co-sponsored and organized the Pacific Northwest Conference on Human Trafficking, and prior to this, in November 2004, co-hosted the Roundtable on Human

Trafficking. Following these events, it became apparent that a focused initiative was needed to create a community response for victims of human trafficking.

The Human Trafficking Response Initiative began in September 2005 with a two-fold goal: the establishment of a victim-centered, community based response mechanism which would ensure the availability of a comprehensive network of services for victims of human trafficking; and the drafting of cross-sectoral guidelines outlining each organization's role in responding to the needs of a trafficked person.

Current BC Programs

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) provides a comprehensive service for all trafficked children who arrive at a BC Port of Entry unaccompanied by a parent or guardian. Since its creation in 1999, following the arrival of several boats off the coast from China containing over 130 unaccompanied children and youth, the Ministry's Migrant Services Program has provided care and protection to close to 400 trafficked, resettled and refugee minor children and youth.

Once in the Ministry's care, a child receives legal guardianship, housing, medical and dental care, access to interpretation and school programs, and assistance with immigration-related legal issues. A social worker assumes case management responsibilities for all aspects of the child's care. This unique program has been recognized by both the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Red Cross as an exceptional example of best practice for the treatment of separated children and youth.

The Human Trafficking Response Initiative is working to create a parallel service for adult victims of human trafficking; however, as no single entity exists for protecting and ensuring services for adults as it does for children, the initiative requires the involvement and commitment of a wide range of community based organizations, provincial ministries, federal departments, and law enforcement agencies.

BC's Human Trafficking Response Initiative


Within the NGO community, a significant number of individuals and organizations have been identified, or identified themselves, as potential service providers for trafficked adults, including networks of sex-trade workers, faith-based groups, operators of safe houses and transition

houses, immigrant settlement services, victim services organizations and immigration lawyers.

The concept of identifying a Lead Agency from within the NGOs to oversee and coordinate all services for trafficked persons has been discussed from the outset. A key aspect of the response will be the availability of a 24-hour crisis response line, operated through the existing VictimLINK program, which provides emergency response and referral in 34 different languages.

Key provincial ministries have also been engaged in the discussion of services and gaps, in particular the Ministries of the Attorney General (liaison to federal immigration matters), Health (emergency care), Community Services (transition house funding), Employment and Income Assistance (emergency and ongoing income), Public Safety and Solicitor General (victim services funding), and Children and Family Development (services for under-19s). A number of federal departments hold responsibility on the issue of human trafficking, and liaison relationships have been established between the Response Initiative and the Departments of Justice, Citizenship and Immigration, and Foreign Affairs.

Many additional aspects of a comprehensive response system are also being addressed, including the need for public awareness raising, training of front line service providers, development of a safety-screening tool for agency use, and coordination with associated initiatives such as the 2010 Vancouver Olympics Planning Committee.

This is the first initiative of its kind in Canada, which as a signatory to the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, has committed to addressing the three P's of Human Trafficking: Prevention, Protection and Prosecution. The prosecution aspect is addressed through provisions in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and the Criminal Code, while recently released federal Guidelines begin to address the protection aspects of the Protocol. 

Robin Pike is the Manager of BC's Human Trafficking Response Initiative.

NEWS



In Memoriam


Melany Crowston

Melany passed away suddenly on September 3, 2006. She was the Director of the Howe Sound Women's Centre in Squamish, BC, as well as being involved in countless anti-violence initiatives. We at the Association had the honour of meeting Melany at our Annual Training Forums and other training events and working with her through the Community Coordination for Women's Safety (CCWS) Program. She was the chair of the Sea to Sky Coordination Initiative, and worked with CCWS on a number of activities, most recently strategizing about developing a coordinated response to sexual assault in her region in advance of the 2010 Olympics. Melany was a driving force for women's safety and a mentor and friend to those who knew her.

Alayne J. Hamilton

Alayne J. Hamilton died on August 27, 2006. Alayne was known throughout Canada for her pioneering work to end violence in families by providing treatment and other services to assaultive men. She was one of the founders of the BC Violence Against Women in Relationships Committee. She was a founding member and guiding light of the Ending Relationship Abuse Society (ERA) of BC. She developed and headed the Victoria Family Violence Project, leading with generosity, passion, perseverance and a hearty laugh. She never gave up on people and had the ability to transform lives with her heartfelt belief in the power of honesty and compassion. Gordon Campbell, the Premier of British Columbia, recognized her efforts and impact in a recent letter of commendation. The Association was proud to work with Alayne in a number of capacities, most recently on a proposal to explore a court-based specialized response to violence against women in relationships for BC. (Some information from an obituary distributed by ERA)

Radhia Jaaber

Radhia Jaaber died of cancer on August 17, 2006, in Brandywine, Maryland. Many readers will remember Radhia from the 2004 BCASVACP Annual Training Forum, where she gave an inspirational keynote speech and workshop on violence against women and intersecting oppressions. From the announcement of her memorial: "Radhia was an extraordinary human rights activist who dedicated her life organizing and promoting justice, liberation, and equality for all people. Once you talked with her, your life was somehow changed forever." 

Introduction to the Community Advocate Support Line

BY ALISON WARD, LEGAL SERVICES SOCIETY



Alison Ward

The Community Advocate Support Line (CASL) is a telephone support line staffed full-time by a lawyer who can provide brief legal advice and legal information to BC advocates in relation to specific client files, in areas including family law and poverty law. The CASL line is a sub-project of the Legal Services Society's LawLINE. The CASL was opened in mid-May, 2006, with funding from the Law Foundation and the Ministry of Attorney General, and is staffed by Alison Ward.

Advocates and community workers can reach CASL at 604-601-6074 from the Lower Mainland, and toll-free within B.C. at 1-877-601-6066. These numbers are for advocate use only; please do not distribute them to the general public.

Alison is available to answer calls from advocates on the CASL from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM., Monday to Friday. CASL cannot provide legal advice to advocates on behalf of their clients unless the advocate provides Alison with their client's full name, contact information, and full name of the opposing party. All information that you give to Alison is confidential and is subject to solicitor-client confidentiality. We have to track this information due to potential conflicts of interest. CASL is part of the LawLINE project, and LawLINE has to know the names of both parties because they can only give advice to one side. The Law Society also requires that we obtain this information.

Sample Call to CASL

This morning's first CASL call is from "Helen," who works as a counsellor in a small, isolated northern community.

Helen is calling me about her client "Ana-Maria." She explains that Ana-Maria recently left her husband after 10 years of marriage, and is now living in a rental apartment. They do not have any children. Ana-Maria's husband was not physically or verbally abusive to her, but she is worried that he may try to take financial advantage of her.

Helen says Ana-Maria has two main concerns. First, the couple bought a house during their marriage, but the legal title to the house is only in her husband's name. Ana-Maria has overheard her husband talking about selling the house several times, and she has heard rumours in town that he is planning to do so very soon. She is worried that he will sell the house without her knowledge and just take off with the money from the sale. She is also concerned that her husband is moving money around between bank accounts, trying to hide money and investments he had, to make it look like there is less property to divide between the two of them. Helen wonders if I have any suggestions about what Ana-Maria should do.

With regard to the family home, I tell Helen that because Ana-Maria's name is not on legal title to the house, it is possible that her husband could sell the property without her knowing about it. But, there is a straightforward, and very affordable, step that Ana-Maria can take to prevent this from happening, and she should do it as soon as possible.

I explain that Ana-Maria can file an application under section 2 of the Land (Spousal Protection) Act. (See http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/L/96246_01.htm). This application is made to the Land Title Office, not to court. Ana-Maria does not need to hire a lawyer to make that application, but she will need to meet briefly with a lawyer, notary or commissioner of oaths to have an affidavit sworn. This application will act as a kind of lien against the legal title to the family home, and prevent her husband from selling the house without Ana-Maria's knowledge or consent.

I tell Helen that Ana-Maria will need to fill out two documents, which are both available online. I refer Helen to the Forms Regulation under the Land (Spousal Protection) Act, which is found at http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/reg/L/85_97.htm. Ana-Maria will need to fill out an application in Form B, and an affidavit in Form A, and file them with the Land Title Office. She will also need to provide the full legal description of the family home on the forms. She can get the full legal description of the family home from her local city or town hall. If she gives the street address to the staff there, they will give her the legal

description of the family home, which is a code with numbers and letters describing the property. In terms of completing the documents, I also tell Helen that, if possible, Ana-Maria should attach a copy of her marriage certificate to her form B application.

Once the documents are completed, Ana-Maria can file the documents directly with the local Land Title Office or Government Agent's office, or she can hire a land title search agent to file the documents for her. She will have to pay a fee of only \$2.50 to the Land Title Office to have the documents filed.

As for Ana-Maria's concern about her husband trying to hide money and other assets, I explain that the B.C. Supreme Court can make orders restraining someone from disposing of or dealing with assets, although the Provincial Court cannot make such an order.

Because Ana-Maria is living on a low income, I suggest that she consider applying for legal aid. I explain that some changes to the Legal Services Society's family law coverage policy took effect on November 1, 2006. These changes give the Legal Services Society more discretion to refer someone to a lawyer where there has not been physical violence in the relationship and there are no safety issues regarding children. If Ana-Maria is financially eligible for legal aid, then Legal Aid will review Ana-Maria's application to see if she has priority to qualify for referral to a lawyer.

I explain that for Legal Aid to help with property division issues, the couple must have equity of at least \$50,000 in their family assets. If so, and there is a clear threat that her husband may hide or sell assets, Legal Aid may be able to pay for a lawyer to apply to Supreme Court on Ana-Maria's behalf for court orders preventing her husband from selling or hiding assets. Legal Aid may also authorize that lawyer to take other steps on Ana-Maria's behalf. Alternatively, Legal Aid might be able to issue Ana-Maria a new "dispute resolution referral." To decide whether Ana-Maria is eligible for a dispute resolution referral, Legal Aid would consider several factors, including whether Ana-Maria is able to resolve her legal problem using other resources such as family duty counsel, whether there would be a significant injustice to Ana-Maria if legal assistance were not available to her, and whether resolving her legal problem would make a significant difference to her ability to be self-supporting. Legal Aid would also consider whether Ana-Maria has any particular barriers to trying to resolve her legal problem without a lawyer's help. Such barriers could include language or

cultural barriers or a physical or mental health condition that affect her capacity to resolve her legal problem without a lawyer.

I explain that if Legal Aid issues Ana-Maria a dispute resolution referral, Legal Aid would pay a lawyer to try and mediate or negotiate with her husband to see if Ana-Maria and her husband can come to an agreement about property division. If the couple can't reach an agreement, the lawyer may also be able to help Ana-Maria by preparing court documents, advising her about her options, and attending a judicial case conference in court if needed. If the lawyer needs to appear in court to resolve Ana-Maria's legal problem, the lawyer can ask Legal Aid if they will approve that service as well.

Helen thanks me for my help and we agree that she will call me back on the CASL line if she has any more questions on behalf of Ana-Maria or her other clients.

Legal Aid to Give More Help to More Families

Update from Legal Services Society

The Legal Services Society (LSS) has expanded legal aid services for family clients in BC, effective November 1, 2006. The improvements, which broaden existing legal advice and representation services, include:

- expanding the role of family duty counsel lawyers in the courts to include preparing for family case conferences and judicial case conferences, and attending these sessions with clients (to be piloted this fall in Kamloops, Kelowna, Port Coquitlam, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Surrey, Terrace, Vancouver, and Victoria);
- expanding eligibility to include clients who have significant custody, access, and financial security issues;
- providing broader dispute resolution assistance to clients with significant issues and who face barriers to resolving the case on their own; and representing clients in court when all other efforts to resolve the case—including a written settlement offer to the opposing party—have been exhausted and resolving the case will make a significant difference to the client or the children.

Legal representation services will continue to be available for eligible clients in emergency situations—for instance, when an immediate court order is required to ensure a client's and/or their children's safety and security or to resolve serious denial of

access to a client's children, or when a client responding to a maintenance enforcement hearing faces a real and immediate likelihood of going to jail.

David Griffiths, LSS Manager of Civil Law, says clients facing emergencies will not have to attempt to reach negotiated settlements before getting legal representation. But he says that in all other situations, "the society will take a discretionary and staged approach to determining which cases should go to litigation."

Changes to Status of Women Canada

The federal government has changed the mandate of the Women's Program (a small grant program) at Status of Women Canada. The wording has been changed from "to support action by women's organizations and other women's equality-seeking groups, thus contributing to the promotion of gender equality and the full participation of women in economic, social, cultural and political life" to the more neutral: "to facilitate women's participation in Canadian society by addressing their economic, social and cultural situation through Canadian organizations." The budget of Status of Women has also been cut by \$5 million. For more information about these changes, and ideas for expressing concern to the federal government, see the website of National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL): www.nawl.ca.


Access to JUSTIN

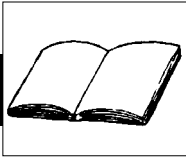
This is a reminder for victim service workers that many court documents are available to the public at JUSTIN terminals in BC courthouses. Information available through the JUSTIN database would generally include pending charges or convictions and previous convictions in BC going back to approximately 2000. A JUSTIN search using the accused's/offender's full name will help to access this information. If you leave the location field in the query blank, then the JUSTIN search for past convictions or other dispositions will be province-wide.

Open Forum for Ending Violence Against Women

On November 2, Radio India hosted a community forum in Surrey in response to recent violence against Indo-Canadian women, including the deaths of Manjit Panghali and Navreet Waraich. More than 2,000 people attended, and both survivors and anti-violence activists were invited

to speak. Harjit Kaur, Special Projects Manager at the Association, spoke briefly at the forum about measures that would increase safety for South Asian women, and in fact for any woman in BC who experiences abuse. Harjit put forward the need for referrals to CBVAPs from police and PBVAPs and Crown; the need for coordination among community agencies, faith groups, and the broader community; and the need for changes to policy and legislation to facilitate the referral processes. Harjit says, "The community's support was clearly apparent in the room... It is unfortunate that it was the loss of women's lives that brought us together, yet it is a step towards addressing the ongoing problem of violence against women in our community and society at large. We thank Radio India, and in particular, Maninder Singh Gill and Harpreet Singh for opening the door for women to be there and we will look forward to offering our support in making a difference in the lives of women, children and families in our community."

To read a powerful article by Shashi Assanand on violence in her community, go to VoiceOnline.com and see the Nov 4 issue. Shashi is founder and director of Vancouver Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services, a Community Coordination for Women's Safety Program Working Group member and member of the BCASVACP through the VLMMFSS STV Counselling Program and CBVAP program. 



Resources

Faith and Culture Related Resources

FaithTrust Institute

The FaithTrust Institute website has many articles, as well as a good list of books and videos, about violence and religious and cultural issues, particularly in Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities. Go to www.faithtrustinstitute.org.

Asian and Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence

An American network that serves as a clearinghouse on information, research, resources and critical issues about violence against women in Asian and Pacific Islander communities. Go to www.apiahf.org/apidvinstitute.

Sakhi for South Asian Women

A community-based organization in New York committed to ending violence against women of South Asian origin. Good resources on their website: www.sakhi.com.

Sikh Women

An American Sikh social justice organization with pages on sexual assault and violence on their website: www.sikhwomen.com.

Shalom Bayit

A California organization focusing on Jewish women and domestic violence. Their website includes useful articles and information. Go to www.shalom-bayit.org.

Violence Against Muslim Women

Articles and information on www.themodernreligion.com/women/w_dv.htm—this site is run by an individual who has collected a great deal of information.

Karamah

An organization of Muslim women lawyers advocating for human rights, including rights for survivors of violence. Go to www.karamah.org/domestic_violence.htm.

Jagori

A feminist organization in New Delhi with resources in English and Hindi. Go to <http://jagori.org/>.

Mennonite Central Committee Website on Violence

A website for survivors and friends/family as well as Mennonite leaders. This website was developed by Elsie Wiebe Klinger, who is presenting a workshop at our Annual Training Forum. Go to www.mcc.org/abuse/.

More Resources...

World Health Organization International Study on Violence Against Women

A recent study confirms that violence against women is a major concern around the world. Read the entire study at www.who.int/gender/violence/who_multicountry_study/summary_report/en/index.html.

National Clearinghouse on Family Violence

The NCFV has a website full of resources, and you can also sign up for their email newsletter (e-bulletin). Go to www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/familyviolence/index.html. You can also reach the NCFV at 1-800-267-1291.

Abused Women in Family Court

An article written by the director of King County Coalition Against Domestic Violence (Seattle), Merrill Cousin, on what abused women experience in Family Court: "I Just Wanted to be Safe: Battered Women's Experiences with the Family Law System in King County." Go to www.kccadv.org/reports.html. Thanks to Janet Freeman for this.

Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare

Another website with a wealth of information and articles. Go to www.cecw-cepb.ca/home.shtml. Thanks to Carol Ross for this tip.

DVD: Let's Talk About It

Produced by Deepa Mehta (director of the trilogy Fire, Earth and Water)—children interview their mothers about the abuse they experienced from their fathers. The participants are primarily South Asian and Caribbean and raise important questions about effective anti-violence interventions for immigrant women and families. DVDs cost \$66.34 from Filmblanc Inc. Call 416-925-6271 or go to www.filmblanc.com.

LSS Newsletter

Go to www.lss.bc.ca to access the ELAN newsletter or to sign up to receive it in your Inbox.

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Vacant

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Mission Statement

The BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs works to coordinate and support the work of victim serving and other anti-violence programs in BC through the provision of issue based consultation and analysis of resource development, training, research and education. Our work is guided by respect for difference, human dignity and equality.

Membership

We work to address the needs of Specialized Victim Assistance Programs, Sexual Assault, Stopping the Violence Counselling Programs and other similar programs. The BCASVACP provides support, training, education, policy and legislative analysis, resource development, and information exchange forums to its member programs.

Your membership will support the BCASVACP in continuing many important services, including the development of analysis, representation on various government committees, administration tools development, and training.

A membership will ensure that your organization has access to the most current information available. Your BCASVACP membership acts also as a voice of community support for our continued working on behalf of your programs.

We always welcome your input and questions. For more information about what BCASVACP membership is all about, contact 604-633-2506, extension 10, or email bcasvacp@endingviolence.org.

We wish to thank the Ministry of Community Services and Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General for their funding support.



BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance & Counselling Programs

☐ Our program wants to be a BCASVACP member. Membership fees are on a sliding scale between \$60 to \$160. (Whatever your program can afford)

☐ I do not qualify for program membership. I would still like to receive the BCASVACP tri-annual newsletters (\$25)

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Mailing Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Website: _____ E-mail: _____

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Please make cheques payable to the BC Assn. of Specialized Victim Assistance & Counselling Programs and forward to #728 – 602 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 1P2

Charitable # 13926 5821 RR0001